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MANUEL DE ALMEIDA:
THE "BLACK SHEEP" OF BRAZILIAN ROMANTICISM

By
Thomas Walter Christie
B.A., University of Montana, 1984
M.A., University of Montana, 1986
Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
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1988

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Manuel de Almeida:

"The Black Sheep of Brazilian Romanticism" (107 pp.)

Director: Stanley L. Rose *SL Rose*

Manuel Antônio de Almeida and his Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant present some interesting problems in Brazilian literary history. This thesis, using Brazilian, Spanish American, and United States literary criticism, examines the 19th century novel focusing on these issues.

The Brazilian Academy of Letters has labeled this novel one of Brazil's best works. Yet critics viewing Memoirs find that it does not truly fit into any of the traditional literary periods of Romanticism or Realism. Furthermore, some critics believe it is actually an adaptation of the Iberian picaresque writing style to Brazil.

Remarkably few critics have addressed this work. This paucity of literary analysis in turn raises other questions: if Memoirs is one of Brazil's best works, why have so few studies appeared; what makes Memoirs important to Brazilian literature; and how is Memoirs helpful to an understanding of Brazilian culture?

Ultimately Memoirs sheds light on Brazilian society and history during the 19th century. Through Almeida's literary approach, which seems to encompass the picaresque, Realism, and Romanticism, students of Brazilian literature may reach a deeper appreciation of Brazil during the late colonial and early imperial periods.

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FOREWORD

Manuel Antônio de Almeida and his Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant present a problem for Latin American and American literary critics. The work, written in 1854, chronologically belongs to the Brazilian Romantic period. Yet its style and subject matter go beyond typically romantic themes. Critics have considered Memoirs to be the first manifestation of Brazilian Realism.

Most Latin American critics are split between categorizing the work as either romantic or realist. Some, including the critic Pedro Henríquez Ureña, believe it to be the first realist novel in Brazil.¹ Others, like Érico Veríssimo, consider the work to be romantic.² However, he admits the multiple classifications by calling Memoirs the "black sheep" of the romantic era. Still others, including Eduardo Freire, consider the book to be picaresque.³

The student of Latin American literature, and above all Brazilian literature, confronts important considerations in

1. Pedro Henríquez Ureña, A Concise History of Latin American Culture, (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 90.

2. Érico Veríssimo, Brazilian Literature: An Outline, (New York: Macmillan, 1945), p. 52.

3. Eduardo Freire, "Do Lazarilho de Tormes ao Filho do Leonardo Pataca," Kriterion, (January - June, 1954): 27-28.

analyzing Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant. The primary difficulty is the categorization of the novel -- picaresque, realist or romantic. An understanding of Memoirs' position in the totality of Brazilian literature requires some categorization of the novel.

This work raises an interesting problem regarding novelistic merit. In a literary poll done by the Revista Acadêmica of Rio de Janeiro, 180 Brazilian authors responded with a list of Brazil's ten greatest novelists. This list included such authors as Machado de Assis, Lima Barreto, José de Alencar, Jorge Amado, and Manuel Antônio de Almeida.⁴ Although Brazilians consider Almeida to be among their ten best authors, remarkably little study and analysis of Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant exists. This lack of scholarship indicates a need for further work and understanding. Examination of the conflicting scholarship regarding Memoirs' location vis-a-vis Realism and Romanticism rewards the student with a comprehension of many unique aspects in the development of Brazilian writing.

Almeida's writing also raises interesting and important issues regarding the culture, society and history of colonial Brazil. Almeida portrays a large cross-section of colonial society. Critics who maintain Memoirs as an exemplar of Brazilian proto-Realism point to the highly

4. Fred P. Ellison, Brazil's New Novel: Four Northeastern Masters, (Berkeley: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. xi.

descriptive treatment the author gives the carioca society of Rio de Janeiro. This treatment, then, may provide social and cultural historians the opportunity to view Rio de Janeiro of that time period through a novelistic medium.

Thus, Memoirs also represents a work possibly useful to students of Brazilian cultural history. Almeida presents, in a neat package, a view of Rio de Janeiro during the colonial era. If Memoirs is historically sound in its recreation of carioca society, its use would allow an expansion of cultural knowledge through a thoroughly enjoyable medium -- the Brazilian novel. Historical uses of Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant depend, though, on the accuracy of Almeida's observations. Critics are far from unanimous in their views of Almeida's historical precision. Some believe Almeida presents a virtual encyclopedia of Brazilian colonial history. Others view Memoirs more skeptically.

Regardless, a thorough understanding of Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant provides the reader with a clearer conceptualization of Brazilian literature and culture. Further, Almeida directly addresses many aspects of colonial Brazilian history and Rio de Janeiro society. Almeida's writing style breathes life into many facets of Brazilian life.

CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO MEMOIRS OF A MILITIA SERGEANT

Any survey of Brazilian literature necessarily requires an examination of Manuel Antônio de Almeida's Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant. Many Brazilian critics and scholars have labeled this novel one of Brazil's best. In the work, Almeida presents a story set during the colonial period while the Portuguese crown held court in Brazil. The work presents a study reflecting both history and literature, and shows a revealing perspective of Brazil during the colonial period. While Almeida uses the novel's characters to carry the narrative, much of the description focuses on the colonial capital of Rio de Janeiro. Indeed, Almeida originally intended to title the novel Scenes of Life in Rio.¹

Between 1809 and 1822, Rio de Janeiro was extremely small. In 1808, the Portuguese Crown had fled to Rio and set up court there after Napoleon invaded Portugal. The influence of the crown helped to improve sanitation and other public services in Rio, accounting for a small population

1. Linton Barrett, Introduction to Almeida, Manuel Antônio de, Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant, trans. Linton Barrett (Washington D.C.: Pan American Union, 1959), p. vii. Hereafter cited as Barrett, Memoirs, Introduction, p.

increase. With the court's addition of 10,000 emigres, Rio quickly surpassed Salvador da Bahia and Recife in size. It became the seat of government, import/export, and other commercial enterprises. Even with these improvements, Rio de Janeiro remained small and poor compared to other cities of similar importance. Population estimates range between 50,000 and 125,000.²

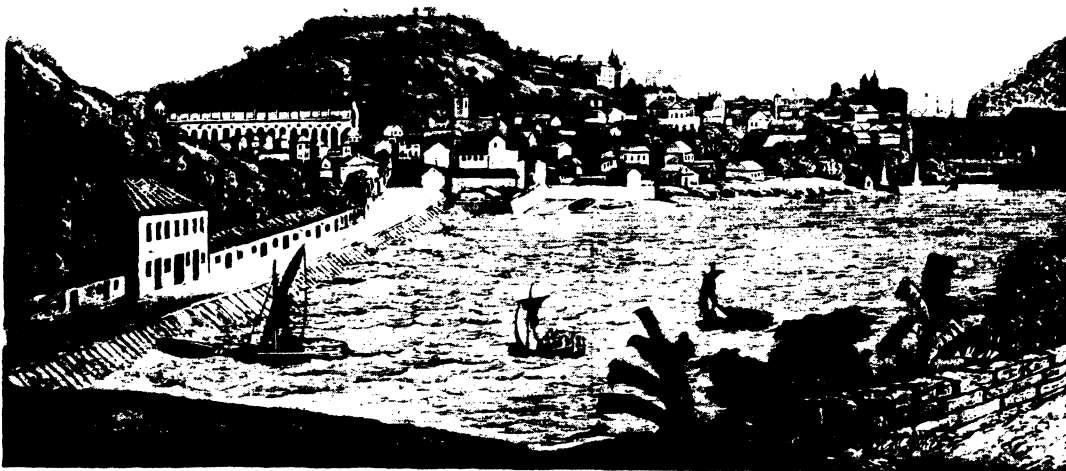
Although Rio de Janeiro forms the background for Memoirs, Almeida's writing does not dwell on the physical environment. Social commentary figures much more importantly in Memoirs. Almeida's descriptions and the story's settings provide entertaining reading and demonstrate late colonial society in Rio de Janeiro. While some critics contest the accuracy of Almeida's depiction of society, Memoirs provides a means for viewing Brazilian colonial society in a pleasant and readable format.³

Criticism of Memoirs' historical accuracy stems in part from the differences between the time of writing (during the 1840's and 1850's) and the story's time setting (between

2. Population estimates range widely for Rio de Janeiro in this period. José Artur Ríos estimates a population of 110,000 in 1821. (Ríos as cited in Barrett, Memoirs, Introduction, p. xi.) A more recent and exhaustive study estimates Rio's population in 1808 at 65,000 and in 1819 at 113,000. Richard Morse, "Brazil's Urban Development: Colony and Empire" in From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil, ed. A. J. R. Russell-Wood (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 173.

3. Barrett, Memoirs, Introduction, p. xiv.

RIO, FROM THE GLORIA HILL



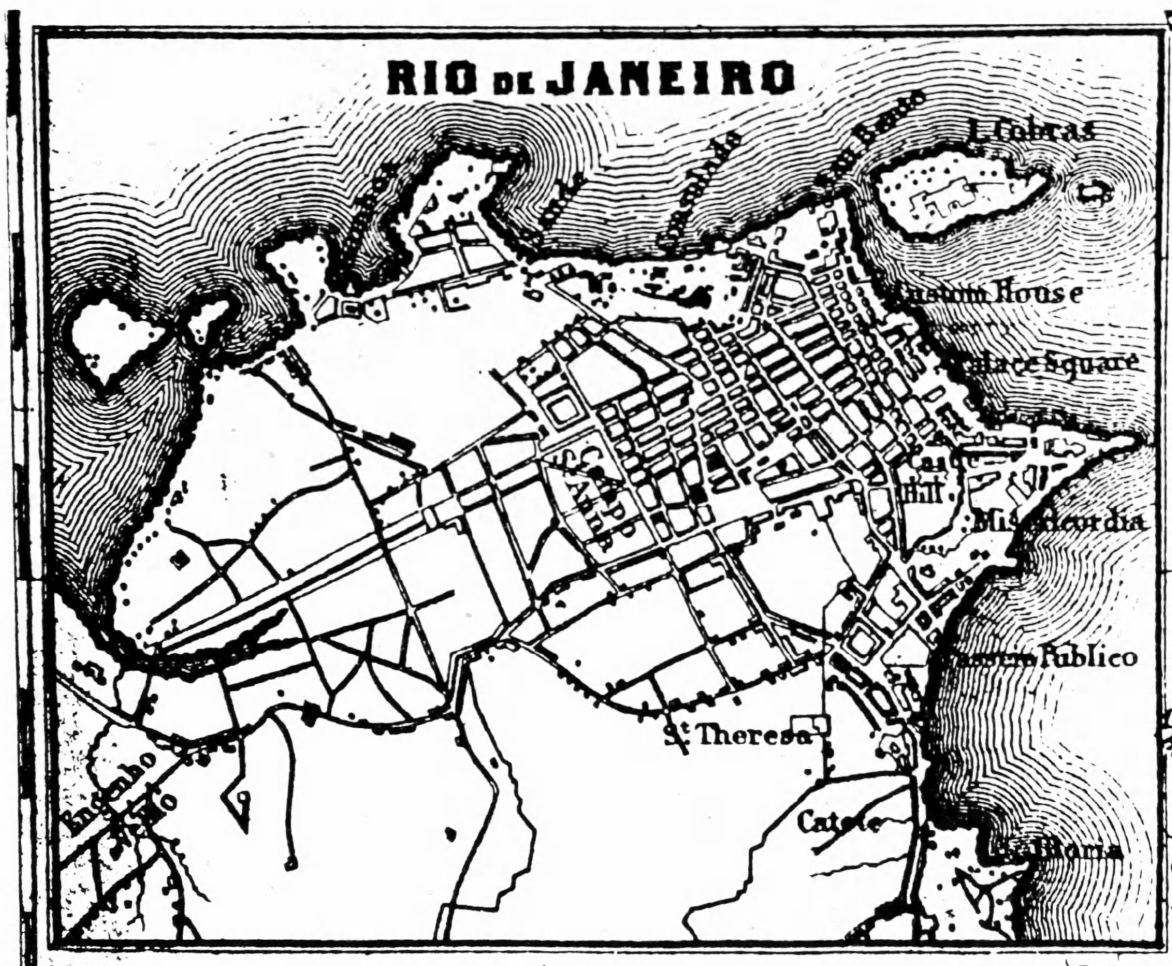
The Portuguese crown family and their escort enjoyed this view of the bay at Rio de Janeiro when they arrived.

1809 and 1822). While thirty years may at first glance appear minimal, Brazil underwent serious and radical changes. Brazil in 1800 was a simple colony; by 1809, Brazil became the de facto center of the Portuguese empire. Brazilian independence came soon after, in 1822, in the form of a constitutional monarchy. When Almeida wrote Memoirs, some elements of the population were agitating for a republican form of government and the abolition of slavery.

One of the first changes made by Portuguese King Dom João IV upon arriving was to open Brazilian ports to non-Portuguese shipping in 1810.⁴ Not only did this measure scrap the mercantile economic system, but it also permitted rapid growth in commercial enterprises. The crown represented money to the colony. Although much tax revenue still went to Portugal to supply the anti-Napoleonic war effort, crown presence sponsored investment in Brazil. Crown presence also exacerbated the resentment between peninsular Portuguese and Brazilian-born Portuguese. Crown patronage went primarily to those of Iberia; only later did native Brazilians receive important government positions. Dom

4. See Maria Odila Silva Dias, "The Establishment of the Royal Court in Brazil", in From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil, ed. A. J. R. Russell-Wood (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 89-108.

MAP OF RIO DE JANEIRO CIRCA 1856



Although Rio de Janeiro grew substantially during the kingdom and early empire, the city remained small even during Almeida's lifetime.

João's changes virtually guaranteed Brazil's destruction as a Portuguese colony.⁵

The zenith of improved colonial status was the declaration of the dual kingdoms. This announcement established Brazil's equal status with Portugal. This action essentially sealed Brazilian independence. It brought into clear conflict the interests of the Portuguese nobility and merchant classes with the new Brazilian elite. Portugal depended on the mercantile system to infuse money into its withered economy. Under this economic system, only Portugal could supply any finished products used in Brazil. Also, most Brazilian port revenues were forwarded on to Portugal. The crown buttressed these monopolistic practices with import and export taxes. Many of these revenues would have been lost if Brazil gained and kept equality, as Brazilian representatives wished for greater economic freedom. Brazilian equality reduced Portugal's importance as a clearing house for Brazilian exports, thus reducing port revenues in Portugal.⁶ Portugal and its nobility could not tolerate Brazilian parity. This conflict led to increasing tension.

By 1817, the Portuguese aristocracy also agitated for the complete return of the crown and the reestablishment of

5. See C. H. Haring, Empire in Brazil: A New World Experiment with Monarchy, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 1-18. Hereafter cited as Haring, Empire, p.

6. Haring, Empire, pp 1-18.

Brazil's inferior colonial status.⁷ The Brazilian elite rejected such a backward movement, preferring equality with Portugal. Kingdom status represented wealth to Brazil, especially considering the favorable trade agreements reached with the English.⁸ As Brazilian delegates arrived at the convocation of the Portuguese Cortes, or parliament, conflicts between Brazil and Portugal surfaced. Time only polarized the delegates' positions.⁹

Once reports filtered back to Rio de Janeiro, many Brazilians became outraged at the Portuguese stance. By 1822, the Brazilians felt cornered into an independence they did not truly desire. At this important junction, Brazilian regent Dom Pedro bowed to pressures in Rio de Janeiro and declared Brazilian independence.¹⁰ Brazil became a constitutional empire under Pedro I of the royal Braganza family.

7. E. Bradford Burns, "The Intellectuals as Agents of Change and the Independence of Brazil," in From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil, ed. A. J. R. Russell-Wood. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 242-243.

8. Maria Odila Silva Dias, "The Establishment of the Royal Court in Brazil," in From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil, ed. A. J. R. Russell-Wood. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 89-92.

9. Emilia Viotti da Costa, "The Political Emancipation of Brazil," in From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil, ed. A. J. R. Russell-Wood. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 84.

10. Haring, Empire, p. 18.

Dom Pedro I found himself ill-suited to rule the new nation.¹¹ Pedro indulged often and to excess. Quite possibly the imperial administration gave a sigh of relief when Dom Pedro abdicated in favor of his infant son, king-to-be Dom Pedro II. To rule during his son's minority, Dom Pedro I established a board of regents.

If Dom Pedro I had a stormy reign, the regency era was tempestuous.¹² The regents rarely agreed on imperial policy, leaving little hope for consistent practical application. Small wonder that most Brazilians, including the regents, welcomed 14-year-old Dom Pedro II's declaration of majority.

Dom Pedro II had a long and prosperous reign.¹³ However, problems continually plagued the empire. Unification of Brazil's huge territorial expanse into a single nation took time and effort. Not until the 1840's and 1850's did Brazil achieve actual consolidation.¹⁴ Slavery posed another dilemma for the emperor. Dom Pedro opposed slavery on ethical grounds. England strongly pressured Brazil into abolishing slavery. However, slave labor formed the basis

11. Haring, Empire, p. 19.

12. Haring, Empire, pp. 44-54.

13. See generally, Mary Williams, Dom Pedro the Magnanimous, Second Emperor of Brazil, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937). Hereafter referred to as Williams, Dom Pedro, p.

14. Haring, Empire, pp. 44-62.

of Brazil's plantation economy -- one of the underpinnings of the empire. The final abolition of slavery constituted a major cause of the empire's destruction.¹⁵ Other problems Dom Pedro II faced included education and social reform.¹⁶

Against this background of rapid change Almeida wrote Memoirs. While Brazil had become independent, slavery and revolutionary new European ideas (especially positivism) began to upset precarious balances in the empire.¹⁷ Although three decades would pass before these tensions toppled the empire, Almeida certainly lived under their influences. These forces colored his subject matter and the societal portraits he created.

Memoirs' story line is remarkably simple. In sum, the work recounts the adventures of a young man who falls in love and attempts to win the love of the object of his affection. However, the process leads the reader through an intricately twisted story, featuring jealousy, scheming, betrayals, and eventually, a happy ending. Memoirs' true wonder is that Almeida succeeded in describing a large cross section of Brazilian society with such a facile theme.

15. Haring, Empire, pp. 85-106.

16. Haring, Empire, pp. 108-110.

17. Pedro Henríquez Ureña, A Concise History of Latin American Culture, (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 81. See generally Leopoldo Zea, The Latin-American Mind, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), for an analysis of positivism of Latin American literature.

The author, Manuel Antônio de Almeida, presents something of an enigma to biographers.¹⁸ He was originally born in Mage, near Rio de Janeiro, on November 17, 1831.¹⁹ Few records exist regarding Almeida's early years, until his admission to medical school at age 19. Almeida's only major work in the sciences was A fisiologia da voz. This monograph demonstrates Almeida's interest in music and sound. It also explains Memoirs' faithful reproduction of the era's language and speech. After graduation in 1856, he found great difficulties in establishing a private medical practice. Humanities appear to have attracted Almeida much more than sciences, so rather than pursue a fruitless occupation, Almeida turned to journalism and translation.

As a journalist, Almeida wrote for the weekly newspaper Correio Mercantil. Memoirs originally appeared as a series of sketches printed in this tabloid. Additionally, Almeida translated French authors into Portuguese, most especially Lamarain and Dumas Pere. Also, a translation of Paul Feval

18. Much of Almeida's life is remarkably undocumented. Serpa, for example, begins his article with: "Quando teria nascido Manuel Antônio de Almeida?" [When was Manuel Antônio de Almeida born?]. Phocion Serpa, "Manuel Antônio de Almeida", Revista Iberoamericana; 9:18 (Mayo 1945): 325. Hereafter cited as Serpa, Revista, p.

19. Serpa, Revista, p. 334.

is attributed to Almeida.²⁰ These authors greatly influenced Almeida's writing.

In 1855-56, Memoirs reached the reading public in book form. Instantly the book received acclaim and popularity.²¹ In response, the government awarded Almeida two different positions. Although Almeida appreciated the financial security of the posts, they were unremarkable positions. Almeida did not achieve fame while working for the government, but he helped out a young clerk who went on to become another important Brazilian author, Machado de Assis.²²

Tragedy struck when Almeida was thirty-one. He drowned when the steamship Hermes sank, killing all aboard. Almeida's early death makes questions about Memoirs' ending academic. At the conclusion of the story, Leonardo becomes a militia sergeant, marries, and lives happily ever after. However, Almeida apparently foreshadows a subsequent volume which never appeared. Many Brazilian critics doubt that it ever would have appeared.²³ Whether Almeida intended on

20. Eugênio Gomes, Aspectos do Romance Brasileiro, (Salvador: Publicações da Universidade da Bahia, 1958), p. 60. Hereafter referred to as Gomes, Aspectos, p.

21. Claude L. Hulet, introduction to section on Almeida in Brazilian Literature, Vol. I, ed. Claude L. Hulet, (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1974), p. 327. Hereafter referred to as Hulet, Introduction, p.

22. Hulet, Introduction, p. 326.

23. Xavier Marques, "O Tradicionalismo de Manuel Antônio de Almeida", Letras Acadêmicas, (Rio de Janeiro: Renasçença Editôra, 1933), p. 11. Hereafter cited as Marques, Tradi-

finishing a sequel, the project became conjecture with his death.

Almeida's total work product gives little insight into the author's thought process. Almeida's published works include Memoirs, Fisiologia da voz, the translations, a few letters to friends and some critical reviews. Almeida also published an unsuccessful short volume of poetry. Almeida's work indicates a strong liking for the French romantic authors, especially Dumas and his Three Musketeers. Apparently Almeida considered himself a part of the Brazilian literary generation which divorced itself from the sterility of outmoded Portuguese models.²⁴

Twentieth-century Brazilian critics consider Almeida to be one of their best novelists. A survey by Brazil's prestigious Revista Acadêmica included Almeida, along with authors Machado de Assis, Jorge Amado and Rachel de Queiroz, in a list of Brazil's ten best novelists.²⁵ Yet while Brazilian critics may agree as to Memoirs' novelistic value, reasons and analyses vary greatly. Some critics, Ronaldo de Carvalho in particular, call the novel realist.²⁶ Others

cionalismo, p.

24. Gomes, Aspectos, pp. 57-59.

25. Fred P. Ellison, Brazil's New Novel: Four Northeastern Masters, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954), p. xi.

26. Ronaldo de Carvalho, Pequena História da Literatura Brasileira, (Rio de Janeiro: Briguet, 1919), p. 149.

not only disagree, but accuse those who do of blindly accepting the historical accuracy of a patently contrived story.²⁷ Disagreement over Almeida's work is such that Érico Veríssimo has labelled Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant "the black sheep of Brazilian Romanticism."²⁸ This confusion leaves the student of Brazilian literature to his or her own devices in assessing the literary value and rationale of this apparently seminal work.

Memoirs, on first reading, does appear to contain elements of both Romanticism and Realism. The love affair between Leonardo and Luízinha presents a typical romanticist storyline. The story focuses on Leonardo, his troubles and the means he employs to overcome them, thus celebrating the hero, much as French, German and English literatures of the romantic period do.

Realist traits also occur frequently in Memoirs. Almeida focuses on the lives of his characters, with an eye toward making them appear human. Although Leonardo is the hero, he may not be or act heroic. Realism also surfaces in the dialogues used by Almeida. The characters speak much as they might in "real life," rather than using formalist Portuguese grammatical norms. Remarkable, too, is the sense one has that Almeida might have been practicing sociology,

27. Marques, *Tradicionalismo*, p. 8.

28. Érico Veríssimo, Brazilian Literature: An Outline, (New York: Macmillan, 1945), p. 52.

rather than writing a novel. The work describes, and sometimes criticizes, Brazilian cultural institutions. Little wonder that Brazilian critics find difficulty in pigeonholing Memoirs.

The question of Memoirs' position in Brazilian literature is important to an understanding of the cultural and literary development in Brazil. Memoirs seems to fit into both the romantic and the realist traditions of Europe. This comparison of Brazilian literature to European is understandable; Brazil, as all Latin America, looked to Europe for cultural and literary models.²⁹ However, Brazilian critics also view works produced in the mid-1800's as the initiation of a purely nationalist literature.³⁰

Memoirs ultimately is Brazilian. Brazilian literary critics consider it one of their best, yet few agree as to why. Certainly it represents a transformation, a metamorphosis from purely European models toward a more organically

29. Alfranio Coutinho, An Introduction to Literature in Brazil, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 131, et passim. Hereafter cited as Coutinho, Introduction, p.

30. Nationalistic tendencies are demonstrated in two general ways. The first is the focus on the unique Brazilian situation as seen through Brazilian authors, eg. Indianist literary works like O Guarani by José de Alencar. The second manifestation concerns political and socio-historical works which, although they discuss atypical romantic subjects, certainly fit within the romantic category stylistically. The writings of José Bonifácio provide an excellent example. See Antônio Soares Amora, História da Literatura Brasileira (Séculos XVI-XX), (São Paulo: Edição Saraiva, 1960), pp. 50-53.

inspired literature. As such, Memoirs provides an important insight to Brazilian national development.

Another troubling problem to the student of Brazilian literature Memoirs' greatness. Although the Brazilian Academy of Letters has lauded the work, it has serious problems. As will be examined, Memoirs suffers from structural problems. The scenes do not flow smoothly together and it lacks thorough integration between chapters. No analytical reason appears to exist for the division into two books. As to content, the convoluted storyline leaves the reader to meander through the various plots and subplots without a clear goal. On the whole, character development is weak. There is some psychological development, but the degree of definition varies greatly.

With all these faults, the student of Brazilian literature must seek an explanation for the importance given to Memoirs. This importance transcends critical appeal, as Memoirs was also dramatized and presented on the stage. In every format -- novel and play -- Memoirs had great popularity and critical acclaim. This critical approval stems in part from the stylistic methods Almeida used. Logically, a study of Memoirs should continue with an examination of the three literary categories critics have used to describe Memoirs.

CHAPTER 2

MEMOIRS AND THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT IN BRAZIL

As did most of 19th Latin America, Brazil adopted Romanticism from European novels. In fact, as the Brazilian Soares Amora wrote:

. . . entretanto, que o romance estrangeiro tenha impedido a criação de um romance que se poderá denominar nacional.¹

Therefore, when Latin American authors produced native works, their writings frequently showed strong European influence. Consequently, any analysis of the Brazilian romantic movement must begin in Europe.

The term "Romanticist" describes a fairly unified number of works sharing certain characteristics. These traits include the importance of personal and public liberty, and powerful emotional realism. Romanticism rejected the stifling classicist mode of thought and writing which had dominated Europe since the Renaissance.

As a reaction against rationalistic classicism, the European Romantic movement emphasized a new body of more en-

1. . . . meanwhile, the foreign novel has prevented the creation of a novel which could be called national. Antônio Soares Amora, História da Literatura Brasileira, (Séculos XVI-XX). (São Paulo: Edição Saravia, 1960), p. 64. Hereafter referred to as Soares Amora, História, p.

thusiastic and colorful ideas and literary styles. The emphasis in Romanticism is individualistic and action-oriented. This focus allowed authors greater freedom in describing the world around them. Abandonment of classicism freed romanticist authors to develop new and innovative writing styles, including the use of vernacular speech.²

European Romanticism was also subtly connected to the historic conditions of the French Revolution and the post-Napoleonic period. After the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, Europe witnessed experimentation and imagination in writing as the aftermath of war forced European society to redefine nationalism and spiritual unity. The new definitions in turn produced a new literature, providing a more accessible story and language through which the reading public could identify themselves with the novels being produced. These new ideas in literature found their most expressive outlet in the form of Romanticism, which resulted in a nonconformist mentality opposed to the previous classical intellectualism, absolutism, and conventionalism.

Of course, Romanticism did not suddenly appear. Precursors included the English re-evaluation of Shakespeare and the German "Sturm und Drang" period. These signaled the

2. Jacques Barzun, Classic, Romantic and Modern, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 1-36.

revival of medieval tales and Germanic legends. As one Brazilian critic has noted:

Verdade é que o romantismo, explorando os tesouros históricos, dava preferência aos mediévos. Daí haver quem o definisse, no domínio da literatura e da arte, como uma volta às tradições da idademédia.³

The writings of Goethe, Rousseau, and other early romanticists influenced and helped define the major themes of the romantic movement. These precursors and the reconstruction of post-Napoleonic society allowed the romantic spirit to conquer most of Europe by 1825.

Romanticism is essentially a body of characteristics which make the work's content different from classicism. These characteristics include: individualism and subjectivism, a sense of mystery encompassing nature and love, and a passion for freedom. Faith in nature, God or the supernatural displaced classicist ideals of reason. The picturesque is also important. Authors included panoramas of forests, lands and customs. They gave an almost tangible expression to feeling. Due to these emphases, the romanticist made characters more multifaceted by examining human nature in greater complexity. Although Romanticism may be

3. It is true that Romanticism, in exploring the treasures of history, gave preference to medieval ones. From this there are some who would define it, in the dominion of literature and art, as a return to the traditions of the middle ages. Marques, Xavier, "O Tradicionalismo de Manuel Antônio de Almeida", Letras Acadêmicas. (Rio de Janeiro: Renasçenca Editora, 1933), pp. 14-15. Hereafter referred to as Marques, Tradicionalismo, p.

encapsulated into tendencies, it is essential to avoid reducing Romanticism to a formula.

Each nation that adopted Romanticism enriched the literary style with its own cultural or geographical influences. Brazilian Romanticism took on particular aspects of Brazilian culture.⁴ As well, Romanticism in Brazil shared some regional traits with other Latin American nations.

All Latin America used romanticist writings to help unify their nations. Romanticism provided a medium through which readers could view their countries in the best possible light. Latin American themes included the cult of the hero, and the beauty of nature. Rarely were seen such mundane topics as the problem of the Indian or the poor. Political theory and ideology formed another important theme.

Brazilian Romanticism focused in large part on less politically revolutionary themes than the Spanish American nations.⁵ However,

4. As Soares Amora relates: "Diferentemente do que se deu na Europa, que tem uma tradição romancística medieval e clássica, no Brasil o romance só começa a ser cultivado por volta de 1840, com o Romantismo." [Different than Europe, which had a medieval and classical novelistic tradition, the novel in Brazil only begins to be cultivated around 1840, with Romanticism.] Soares Amora, História, p. 63.

5. As Gómez-Gil points out, a characteristic of Spanish American romantic writing was: "Sentido de exposición y crítica de la realidad política y social y cierta tendencia moralizante que a veces resta valores estéticos, por la prédica demasiado evidente." [A sense of exposition and criticism of the political and social reality and a certain

O ideário romântico, facilmente acomodou-se a nossa cultura, dinamizada, desde 1808, ou mais definidamente de 1822, para a criação entusiástica da nacionalidade: em 1833 a Sociedade Filomática, associação patriótica e de cultura, da Faculdade de Direito de São Paulo (recém-fundada, 1827), comemora o 7 de Setembro com um manifesto nacionalista e romântico: o abandono dos temas clássicos, a busca dos temas nacionais e de uma "língua brasileira".⁶

In part, this particular characterization reflected Brazilian history.⁷ Brazil never faced the kind of social and political upheaval caused by the European revolutions; nor did it face the kind of turmoil experienced by other Latin American nations as they struggled for independence. Brazil made a calm and peaceful transition from a colonial possession to independence. This placid transition occurred mostly due to the 1808 establishment of the Portuguese crown

tendency to moralize, which at times leaves aesthetic values for too evident preaching.] Orlando Gómez-Gil, Historia Crítica de la Literatura Hispanoamericana, (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. 318. While Brazilian literature experienced similar phenomena, such writings did not become common place until the 1870's. See Veríssimo, Brazilian Literature, pp. 55-73.

6. The romanticist concept, easily accommodated itself to our culture, after 1808, or more definitively after 1822, for the enthusiastic creation of nationality: in 1833 the Philomatic Society, a patriotic and cultural association, of the Faculty of Law at São Paulo (recently created in 1827), commemorates September 7 with a nationalist and romanticist manifesto: the abandonment of classical themes and the search for national themes and the "Brazilian Language." Soares Amora, Historia, p. 53.

7. See C.H. Haring, Empire in Brazil: A New World Experiment with Monarchy, (New York: Norton and Co., 1968). Hereafter referred to as Haring, Empire, p.

family in Brazil after Napoleon invaded the Iberian Peninsula.

Once the Napoleonic era had ended, Brazil received its independence, but with particular differences from the rest of Latin America.⁸ In 1822, Brazil became an empire because the Portuguese crown prince, Dom Pedro, simply declared independence. The establishment of the Brazilian empire allowed an easy transition from the earlier aristocratic government. The new government did not disturb any social institutions or introduce any radical changes, ensuring continuity existed with the previous Portuguese government.

While Dom Pedro's declaration maintained unity with Portuguese governmental theory, Brazilian Romanticists rejected previous norms of writing. These authors rejected the formalism and absolutism of classical Portuguese writing.⁹ Almeida fit well in the romanticist group. Gomes notes that: "Almeida já foi acusado de jacobinismo, de reação antilusitana."¹⁰ Moreover, Almeida used the literary medium to combat " . . . a hipocrisia, a venalidade, a in-

8. Ibid., pp. 1-18.

9. The one significant exception was José Maria Eça de Queirós, (1845-1900), see: Coutinho, Introduction, pp. 165-166.

10. Almeida has already been accused of jacobinism and anti-Portuguese reaction. Gomes, Aspectos, p. 65.

justiça e a corrupção social."¹¹ Almeida's satirical viewpoint and lampooning commentary on Luso-Brazilian customs display his conception of the crown's influence on Brazil.

Brazil rejected Portuguese "old world" standards, and adopted French cultural influences. French culture replaced the previous Portuguese importance in Brazil, and as such, impacted greatly on Brazilian authors. One literary historian points to the influence of

. . . o grupo da Revista Niterói (elaborada na França, em 1836): Magalhães, Pôrto Alegre e Tôrres Homem, empenhados em divulgar, no Brasil, os ideais românticos, sobretudo em indicar ao Brasil a trajetória para uma autêntica literatura nacional.¹²

By rejecting Portuguese norms and imitating French style, Brazil sought out more appropriate means of self-expression.

European authors who influenced Brazilian writers greatly included Stendahl, Hugo, Scott, Byron, Leopardi, and Balzac.¹³ Critics dispute which European romanticist influenced Brazil most, but Almeida's models seem clear. Almeida frequently translated European authors to earn extra money. Among his favorite authors to translate were

11. . . . the hypocrisy, venality, injustice and social corruption. Gomes, Aspectos, p. 59.

12. . . . the group of the Revista Niteroi (developed in France in 1836): Magalhães, Pôrto Alegre and Tôrres Homem, devoted to spreading, in Brazil, Romanticist ideals, above all to indicate to Brazil the trajectory toward an authentic national literature. Soares Amora, História, p. 53.

13. Soares Amora, História, p. 53.

Lamarain and Dumas.¹⁴ The critic Gomes finds Almeida's notes on Dumas to be particularly enlightening:

Outra evidência de sua subordinação ao Romantismo era o conceito em que tinha o popularíssimo criador dos "Três Mosqueteiros", a quem designava como "o grande mestre, o grande gênio do romance moderno" . . . ¹⁵

Almeida's admiration for Dumas easily leads Gomes to place Almeida into the Brazilian Romantic movement.

Romanticism was a particularly adaptable type of writing to express the developing Brazilian character. Brazilian authors conscientiously rejected simple imitation. They defended Brazilian motifs and themes, enlarging on the concept of Brazilian awareness and nationality. Romanticism aided Brazilian linguistic expression by exploring Brazilian physical and social landscape with descriptive, romantic phrases. Brazilian Romanticist José de Alencar displayed all of these views.

Brazil did pass through a type of revolution.¹⁶ After 1822, the middle class increased rapidly. Commercial

14. Eugênio Gomes, Aspectos do Romance Brasileiro, (Salvador: Publicações da Universidade da Bahia, 1958), p. 57. Hereafter referred to as Gomes, Aspectos, p.

15. Other evidence of his subordination to Romanticism was his concept of the very popular creator of The Three Musketeers, whom he described as "the great master, the great genius of the modern novel". . . Gomes, Aspectos, p. 58.

16. See Richard Morse, "Brazil's Urban Development: Colony and Empire", in From Colony to Empire. ed. A. F. R. Russell-Wood. (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1975), pp. 155-183.

activity increased as did professional schools and political activity. Rio de Janeiro became a literary capital through the efforts of the Portuguese court during its stay in Brazil (1808-1821).¹⁷ Freedom of the press reigned and many journalists approached their stories with a greater intellectual awareness and curiosity about the nation. The intellectual revolution flourished after the

. . . década de 40, ao se iniciar o II Reinado, e superado caótico período político, que foi o da Abdicação de D. Pedro I, o da Regência, e o da Maioridade de Pedro II, -- com o estímulo do Imperador, de centros de cultura como o Instituto Histórico e Geográfico (Rio, 1838), o Conservatório Dramático Brasileiro (Rio, 1843), de jornais e revistas como o Diário do Rio de Janeiro (1821-1878), Correio Mercantil (Rio, 1848-1868), A Iris (Rio, 1848-49), Guanabara (Rio, 1850-1856)-- alcança-se um índice de produção romântica já bastante significativo.¹⁸

However, students of Latin America are reminded by Soares Amora that:

Para a compreensão do Romantismo brasileiro é necessário não esquecer que aqui (como em todos os países americanos) coincidiram com a revolução romântica os movimentos políticos que fizeram e consolidaram a Independência. . . . Se é verdade

17. Haring, Empire, pp. 63-66.

18. . . . the 40's at the initiation of the second kingdom, and overcoming the chaotic political period which was that the abdication of Pedro I, the regency during the minority of Pedro II -- with the stimulation of the emperor, of centers of culture like the Historical and Geographical Institute (Rio, 1838), the Brazilian Drama Conservatory (Rio, 1843), of newspapers and magazines like the Diário do Rio de Janeiro (1821-1878), Correio Mercantil (Rio, 1848-1868), A Iris (1848-1849), Guanabara (Rio 1850-1856)-- reached an index of Romanticist production of great significance. Soares Amora, Historia, p. 54.

que D. João VI, Pedro I, José Bonifácio, Feijó, Pedro II foram os mais diretos construtores da pátria nova, também é verdade que escritores de ficção, jornalistas, publicistas, oradores sacros e parlamentares, historiadores e escritores de livros didáticos -- contribuíram decisivamente para a formação de uma consciência nacional, isto é, para a formação da consciência de uma realidade brasileira, com sua história, com sua geografia (física e humana), com sua conjuntura política, social e econômica, com as peculiaridades de sua gente.¹⁹

The Romanticist movement in all Latin America appeared after Romanticism had firmly established itself in Europe. Critic Alfrânio Coutinho finds that Brazilian Romanticism reached its acme nearly twenty years after European Romanticism peaked with the publication of Stendahl's romantic masterpiece, The Red and the Black.²⁰

If Brazilian Romanticism reached its zenith between 1846 and 1856, Almeida's Memoirs, published in 1854, clearly fits into the approximate time period of Romanticism. Yet, as with many schemes of classification, time is a poor and

19. For comprehension of Brazilian Romanticism it is necessary not to forget that here (as in all American nations) the romantic revolution and the political movements which began consolidation of independence coincided. . . . If it is true that João VI, Pedro I, José Bonifácio, Feijó, Pedro II were the most direct builders of the new country, it is also true that fiction writers, journalists, publicists preachers and parliamentarians, historians and writers of didactic works -- contributed decisively to the formation of a national consciousness, that is to the formation of a truly Brazilian consciousness, with its own history, with its own geography (physical and human), with its own political circumstances, social and economic, with the peculiarities of its own people. Soares Amora História, pp. 50-52.

20. Coutinho, Introduction, pp. 131-138.

vague consideration to use instead of content. Time constraints may bind no style. However, many, if not all, of the characteristics of Romanticism appear in Memoirs.²¹

The primary elements of Romanticism in Memoirs specifically apply to the Brazilian situation.²² The first and most important of these characteristics is a subjective individualism. The book takes the reader through the life of Leonardo. Almeida portrays Leonardo growing up, from the time when he tormented his neighbors with his crying, to his adulthood and eventual marriage. During his youth, Leonardo sat in his godfather's barbershop, making faces at the customers.²³ He spent his school time in a perpetual war with the headmaster.²⁴ Throughout his early years, Leonardo shows a particularly individual approach to life.

There is nothing particularly evil about Leonardo's character, but he seems to always find trouble. Although some of Leonardo's difficulties appear justified, often Leonardo just seems unlucky. When Leonardo becomes an altar

21. Coutinho, Introduction, pp. 125-127.

22. Coutinho, Introduction, pp. 125-127.

23. Manuel Antônio de Almeida, Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant, tr. Linton L. Barrett (Washington: Pan American Union, 1959), Part I, Chapter III, p. 16. Hereafter cited as Almeida, Memoirs, Part, Chapter, p.

24. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XII, pp. 57-61.

boy, he plays a number of pranks, and pays for each one.²⁵ Later in life, his father takes a new mistress and Leonardo and the mistress have personality conflicts. Finally tensions escalate until Leonardo abandons the household.²⁶ After Leonardo leaves he faces one setback after another, until he ends up a military conscript.

At all times, the book focuses on Leonardo and his adventures. Leonardo's situations are ingenious and individual. Although at points character development is weak, through Leonardo, Almeida presents a clearly defined character, typical of romantic novels.²⁷

Another key element of Romanticism is faith in God or in some greater supernatural power. Because of the heavy influence of African and Haitian religions, faith and belief in the supernatural are common in Brazil. Illiteracy and superstition aided African tradition and supernatural belief.²⁸ Although Almeida satirizes the belief in the supernatural, it appears frequently in Memoirs. Almeida concisely states the role of superstition in Brazil through an explanation of why Leonardo-Pataca, a bailiff, would resort to sorcery:

25. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XIII and XIV, pp. 62-73.

26. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter VI, pp. 147-151.

27. Coutinho, Introduction, p. 125.

28. Coutinho, Introduction, p. 125.

And it was not only the common people who gave credit to witchcraft. It is said that many persons of high society of that time went sometimes to buy fortunes and felicities for the easy price of practicing a few immoralities and superstitions.²⁹

Leonardo's father, the bailiff, faced rejection by his gypsy girlfriend. He visited a sorcerer for help in recapturing her love. On the sorcerer's advice, he resorted to ointments, chants, and dances. A typical session began:

Always with a pecuniary contribution, he had undergone fumigations of suffocating herbs, swallowed potions of very nauseating taste. He knew by heart thousands of mysterious prayers which he was obliged to repeat many times a day. He went almost every night to deposit, in specified places, quantities and objects with the aim of calling their divinities . . . to his aid.³⁰

Almeida humorously criticizes these practices by having the local police catch him in the midst of one of these dances while Leonardo-Pataca is naked.³¹

Superstitious practices by midwives also come under attack in Memoirs. Leonardo's godmother, the comadre, is a famous midwife. The comadre assisted at his birth and placed a rue sprig upon his bellybutton to ward off evil spirits.³² Much later, the midwife attempted to cure Leonardo's godfather, the barber. She suggested rosemary

29. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter IV, p. 21.

30. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter IV, pp. 21-22.

31. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter IV, pp. 20-21.

32. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter I, p. 124.

baths, and when these failed, an apothecary recommended pharmaceutical remedies. The comadre protested the use of medicines, trusting natural and supernatural remedies instead.³³

Brazilian romantic spirituality also had a heavy influence of fatalism.³⁴ Almeida notes this fatalistic tendency when he suggests that

it is plain that Leonardo's fortune is always redounded to his harm . . . we have rightly said that for him there was no fortune that did not turn into misfortune, and no mishap from which good fortune did not result.³⁵

No Brazilian author treating superstition and fatalism can ignore the Portuguese proverb speculating on life. Almeida is no exception, as he reminds the reader: "the past, yonder it goes: God is like that. He writes straight with crooked lines."³⁶

The theme of love presents itself as another essential characteristic of Romanticism which appears in Memoirs. Several passionate episodes appear. The most important of these is the love between Leonardo and Luizinha. Almeida notes the mysteriousness of love when he suggests that

how Luizinha . . . inspire[d] love in him [Leonardo] is a secret of the youth heart, which is not

33. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter V, pp. 141-146.

34. Coutinho, Introduction, pp. 125-126, 142.

35. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XIX, p. 209.

36. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XXIV, p. 239.

given to us to penetrate. The fact is that he loved her, and that suffices.³⁷

This love between Leonardo and Luizinha endures a great deal. It suffers Luizinha's initial coquettishness and rejection.³⁸ It survives Leonardo's separation from her, during which time Luizinha marries.³⁹ Later Luizinha's husband dies and Leonardo returns as a sergeant of the Grenadiers. They rekindle their love affair and eventually marry.⁴⁰

The later relationship between Leonardo and Luizinha differs greatly from the initial tentative declaration that a blushing young Leonardo made to Luizinha.⁴¹ The development of the love between them is probably the most touching part of the story. At Leonardo's first meeting with Luizinha, he finds her to be a skinny, bony, totally unappealing young girl.⁴² Before Leonardo's startled eyes, Luizinha develops into a very enticing, attractive young woman.⁴³

37. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XXI, p. 106.

38. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XX, pp. 101-105.

39. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XII, pp. 179-182.

40. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XXIV, pp. 236-240.

41. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XXIII, pp. 114-117.

42. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XVIII, p. 95.

43. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XX, p. 102.

Leonardo has another love in this story, or at least another passionate infatuation, with Vidinha. She is a coquettish, fickle young woman who goes from one suitor to another.⁴⁴ The relationship between Vidinha and Leonardo is fraught with jealousy and tribulations, as Vidinha's cousins find themselves displaced in Vidinha's affections by Leonardo. Yet,

During these days, the bonds between Leonardo and Vidinha were tightened further. It always happened so: do you wish to bind ourselves fast to something, then make us suffer for its sake? These two had suffered for each other, and that was a powerful reason for their loving each other more and more.⁴⁵

One of the cousins betrays Leonardo's presence to the police, thus ending the relationship.⁴⁶

Another episode of love and passion in the book relates Leonardo-Pataca's love for a gypsy woman.⁴⁷ His intentions are largely unnoticed by her, and she prefers wealthier, younger men to Leonardo-Pataca's presence. When rebuffed, Pataca's passion overwhelms him and he resorts to the services of a sorcerer-witch doctor.⁴⁸

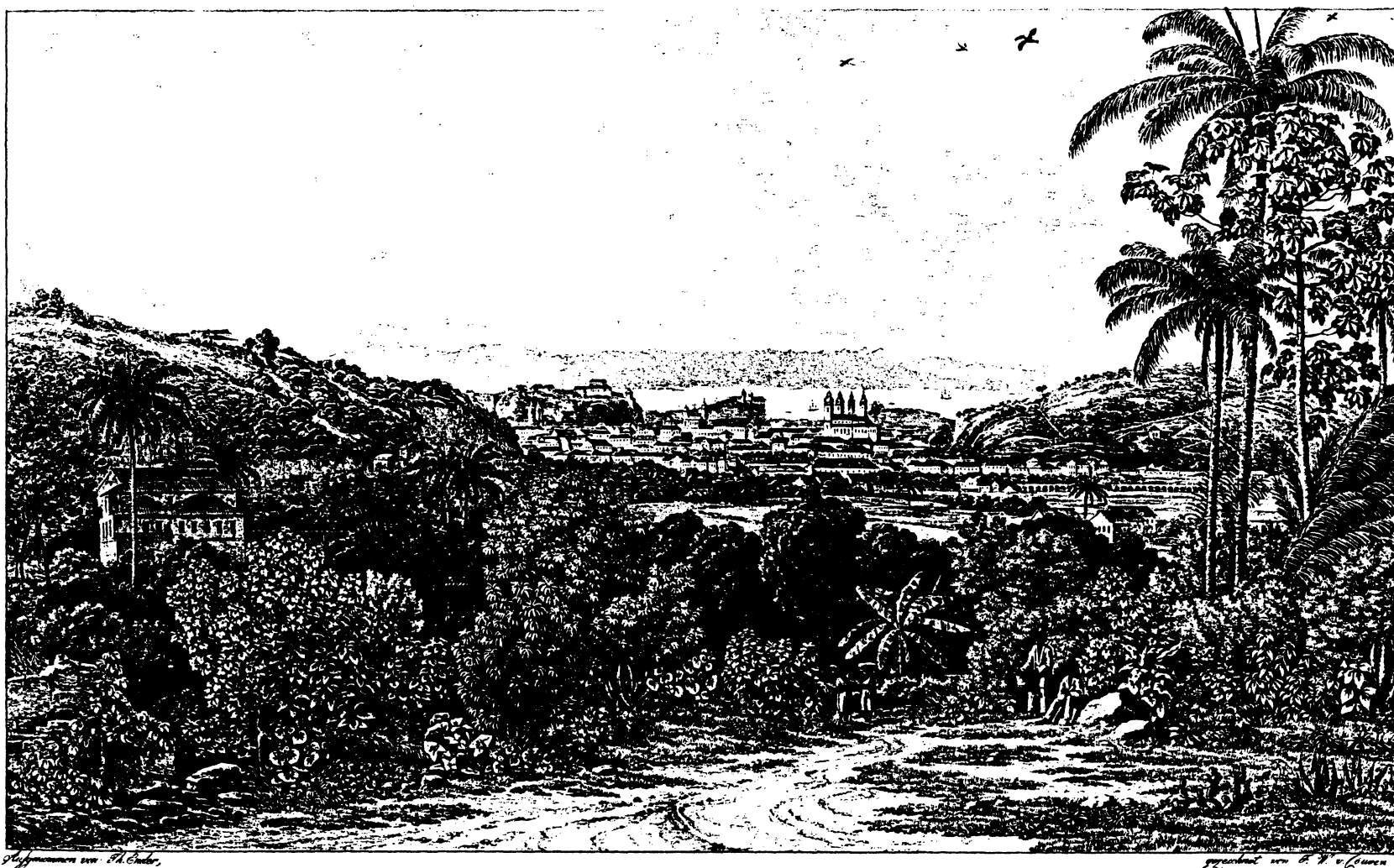
44. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter VIII, pp. 157-161.

45. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XI, p. 176.

46. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XI, p. 177.

47. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter IV, pp. 20-22.

48. Ibid.



A CLÉARING NEAR RIO DE JANEIRO

In a clearing similar to this, Major Vidigal apprehended Leonardo at a picnic; Vidinha's jealous cousins had complained of Leonardo's mischief.

The police chief, Major Vidigal, is yet another victim of love. His love for Maria-Regallada ultimately saves Leonardo from extreme punishment, and wins him the position of sergeant. Even though the Major is a strict military disciplinarian, when Maria-Regallada offers to allow him to move in with her, he jumps at the opportunity. He forsakes his legendary discipline and military sternness to take advantage of the opportunity to fulfill his love for her and further their relationship.⁴⁹

Almeida has a much broader sense of love though, as he shows the godfather's powerful feelings toward Leonardo. Leonardo was a mischievous child, yet in spite of all his misbehavior, Leonardo "won his godfather's greater affection . . . and which shortly reached the extreme of blind and impassioned idolatry."⁵⁰ Even in the worst pranks, "the good man found much that was funny, and to his mind, there was not a finer boy in all the quarter, and he never tired of relating to the neighbors all that [Leonardo] said and did."⁵¹ Almeida's description of the godfather allows a better understanding of this passion for Leonardo. The godfather's love

was natural in a man of his way of living. He was already fifty-odd years old, and had never known

49. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XXIII, pp. 230-235.

50. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter III, p. 15.

51. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter III, p. 15.

true love; he had always managed to get along by himself, lonely, isolated; he was a true partisan of the most determined celibacy. Thus, in the first affection he had been led into forming, his heart expanded . . . and his love . . . grew to the point of besotted blindness.⁵²

The love theme plays an important role in demonstrating Memoirs' classification as romanticist; however this is not the only indication that Almeida's work belongs to the Brazilian romantic tradition.

Some critics argue that Memoirs' setting most accurately indicates the work's position in Romanticism. Almeida lived and wrote the book in the 1850's, publishing it in 1854. Yet the story takes place in an earlier period, between 1808 and 1822. Almeida begins the book by setting it ". . . in the time of the king," when the crown held court in Rio.⁵³ Consequently, some critics believe that this shows an escapist tendency on the part of Almeida, a tendency occurring frequently in romanticist literature.⁵⁴

Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant contains many romanticist characteristics. The work easily fits into the romanticist category. However, Almeida realistically represents his characters. He carefully describes social customs and professions. This faithfulness to detail leads many other

52. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter III, p. 15-16.

53. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter I, p. 1.

54. Agrippino Griego, Evolução da Prosa Brasileira, (Rio de Janeiro: Editorial Ariel, 1933), p. 46.

critics to associate Memoirs with Realism, sometimes referred to in Latin America as costumbrismo.

CHAPTER 3

MEMOIRS AND REALISM

As with Romanticism, Realism represents essentially a European phenomenon which spread to Latin America. Traditionally, critics view Realism (along with Brazilian Naturalism and Parnassianism), as reactions against an excessively emotional Romanticism.

In Europe, several historic events aided in the development of Realism.¹ Prominent was the rise of science. European society encouraged scientific development with particular application to industry. Inevitably, some scientists applied the scientific method to society. European social theories penetrated Brazil; of special influence were the works of Mill, Spencer and Comte.² Auguste Comte's positivist philosophy strongly influenced Latin America, particularly Brazil. Through Positivism, Comte and his followers tried to apply science to the study of human and social intercourse and behavior. Ultimately Positivism

1. Alfrânio Coutinho, An Introduction to Literature in Brazil, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 119-124. Hereafter referred to as Coutinho, Introduction, p.

2. Pedro Henríquez Ureña, A Concise History of Latin American Culture, (New York: Praeger, 1966), pp. 80-82.

rejected theological and metaphysical explanations regarding the causes of things. Instead, Comte placed emphasis on science and natural phenomena to comprehend cause and effect. Eventually some adherents used this philosophy to justify such concepts as racial superiority.³

Positivists believed the doctrine, if rigorously followed, would lead to economic growth coupled with societal order. As interpreted, countries using Positivism could attain industrial growth without the specter of labor unrest. Positivist philosophy offered nations like Brazil, which required massive development, hope based on scientific determinism. The ruling sectors of society believed the scientific method could show the way to achieve the best possible lifestyle for mankind.⁴ These historical conditions helped sponsor a literature emphasizing action and rationality, in opposition to Romanticism. Scientific method emphasized by Positivism required close examination of life; one literary manifestation of this approach was Realism. Realism may not be strictly defined. Since both Realism and Romanticism allowed an author his or her indivi-

3. E.g., Mexican leaders, referred to as científicos, used Positivism to justify many forms of social control during the era of Porfirio Díaz. See Michael C. Meyer and William L. Sherman, The Course of Mexican History, 2nd ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 439-442.

4. Coutinho, Introduction, pp. 154-160.

dual stylistic traits, only general characteristics provide any useful working definition of Realism.⁵

A central characteristic of Realism is its attempt to present an objective truth. Realism uses character development to present this view. Realistic characters have all-too-human motives that dominate and create conflicts, which in turn create the plot. While Romanticism frequently focused on description, Realism often uses narration for presentation. The attention to detail and background forces realist works to move slowly in plot development.

Some similarities exist between Realism and Romanticism. Realism, just as Romanticism, reached Brazil some years after its European appearance. Moreover, Brazilian governmental and historical conditions readily allowed both realist and romanticist development. Brazil stabilized politically around the figure of the constitutional monarch, Emperor Dom Pedro II.⁶ The Empire provided the stability needed for scientific and cultural progress.⁷ The imperial

5. Coutinho, Introduction, pp. 159-160.

6. C. H. Haring, Empire in Brazil: A New World Experiment with Monarchy, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 28-30. Hereafter referred to as Haring, Empire, p.

7. See generally Mary Williams, Dom Pedro the Magnanimous, Second Emperor of Brazil, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), and Anfriso Fialho, "The Emperor Pedro II: A Favorable View" in A Century of Brazilian History Since 1865, ed. Richard Graham, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), pp. 19-31.

parliament issued laws on a variety of issues: public lands, taxation, public health, and organization of the diplomatic services. By 1850 the Brazilian government adopted a commercial code to ensure economic progress.⁸ The interior of the country opened up as the mines of Minas Gerais began producing precious metals. In virtually all sectors, the Brazilian government pushed for development.

The country rested on a stable base made of three segments of society: the plantations, the church and the military. The large planters owned slave plantations producing sugar and rubber. The clergy formed the most powerful and best organized group outside the government. The military protected the crown and parliament, especially after reorganization and better equipment resulting from the War of the Triple Alliance.⁹

Brazilian politics fluctuated between conservative and liberal parties, but always the emperor guided and stabilized the government.¹⁰ The liberal, democratic attitude of the political parties pushed for educational improvement, decreasing the illiteracy of the burgeoning middle class.

8. Haring, Empire, pp. 64-66.

9. A major thesis of Haring's Empire is that the regime eventually collapsed from the conflicts between the various social institutions. Haring, Empire, pp. 157-166.

10. Hubert Herring, A History of Latin America, 3rd. edition, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), pp. 835-836.

More newspapers were founded providing information to the people.

Against this background, Almeida's work appeared. Those who call Almeida a realist suggest that he was slightly ahead of his time.

Nas décadas de 50 e 60 atinge, nossa literatura romântica, o seu clímax. A partir de 1868, como se verá, a revolução realista há de superar o Romanticismo, que em meio século logrou definir uma cultura e uma literatura nacionais.¹¹

Almeida wrote Memoirs before the realist school in Brazil truly became established, reaching its zenith with Machado De Assis (1839-1908) and Raul Pompéia (1863-1895). As the Brazilian critic Mário de Andrade has noted:

Não lhe escapou a inópia da crítica nacional, "ao repetir que o romance é realista e naturalista, não lembra nenhuma obra anterior a ele, e é precursor do realismo e do naturalismo francês."¹²

Although generally referred to as costumbrismo, Brazilian realist literature has been subdivided into certain

11. In the 50's and 60's, our romantic literature reached its climax. After 1868, as will be seen, the realist revolution overcame romanticism, which in five decades achieved a definition of a national culture and literature. Antônio Soares Amora, Historia da Literatura Brasileira (Seculos XVI-XX), (São Paulo: Edição Saravia, 1960), pp. 54-55. Hereafter referred to as Soares Amora, Historia, p.

12. He did not escape the poverty of national criticism. "To repeat that the novel is realist and naturalist, is to forget that there was no [realist or naturalist] work before his. He is the precursor of realism and of French naturalism." Mario Andrade as cited in Freire, Eduardo, "Do Lazarillo de Tormes ao Filho do Leonardo Pataca", Kriterion, (January - June, 1954): 80. Hereafter referred to as Freire, Lazarillo, p.

general archetypes.¹³ The most widely recognized model is the social custom pattern, from which the term costumbrismo derives. There is a biographical pattern, in which a character stands out and everything else in the work establishes the essential traits or portrays the reactions of the protagonist in various situations. Also, there is a regional pattern, bringing together individuals of different social groups and classes. This type emphasizes Brazilian regionalism. There is the environmental pattern, stressing the essential bonds formed between an individual and his area of living. Lastly, there is the psychological pattern, analyzing the motivations of a character. Three realist categories appear in Almeida's Memoirs -- the psychological pattern, the regionalist pattern, and the social custom pattern.

Although Memoirs does not reach the depths of the later Brazilian realist, Machado de Assis, Almeida's situations and characters show remarkably credible emotional patterns. Gomes even suggests that Almeida ". . . antecipa Machado de Assis em suas melhores realizações de caráter psicológico."¹⁴ An important example of this occurs when Leonardo

13. Coutinho, Introduction, p. 168.

14. . . . he anticipates Machado de Assis in his better psychological character achievements. Eugênio Gomes, Aspectos do Romance Brasileiro, (Salvador: Publicações da Universidade da Bahia, 1958), p. 74. Hereafter referred to as Gomes, Aspectos, p.

declares his love to Luizinha. After a period where Leonardo initially rejected the girl as being unworthy of his attention, she blossoms before his very eyes into a lovely young woman, and Leonardo decides to declare his love:

Leonardo watched her go away, rather stupefied by the response she had given him, but not entirely discontent: his lover's eye had discerned that what had just happened had not been totally displeasing to Luizinha.

When she disappeared, the youth heaved a sigh of relief and sat down, for he was as worn out as if he had finished a wrestling bout with a giant.¹⁵

Leonardo tentatively displays his emotions to Luizinha. He overcomes his fear to declare his love to Luizinha, the effort exhausting him.

Another psychologically revealing episode occurs when Chiquinha, Leonardo-Pataca's mistress becomes irritated with Leonardo. Almeida characterizes Chiquinha as the type of person whose "spirits were so contrary minded that they delighted in heightening another's irritation, and the more irritable they catch an unhappy person, the more they like to prick him."¹⁶ After a petty accident in the household when Leonardo tipped over a lace cushion, Chiquinha blew up. She accused Leonardo of intentionally trying to wreck her property. Even though Leonardo tried to stifle his anger,

15. Manuel Antônio de Almeida, Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant, tr. Linton L. Barrett (Washington: Pan American Union, 1959), Part I, Chapter XXIII, pp. 116-117. Hereafter cited as Almeida, Memoirs, Part, Chapter, p.

16. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter VI, p. 147.

Chiquinha, with remarkable foresight, yelled at him "Oh, if you were in the Army! Oh, to have you off at sea! Oh, if Major Vidigal would get you!"¹⁷ Leonardo-Pataca took his mistress's side, and threw his son out of the house.

Candid scenes of humanity fill Memoirs. Although Almeida did not develop his characters as well as other later realist authors, critics agree that Almeida presented a spectacular demonstration of humankind:

Manuel de Almeida é, como se vê, muito mais que um simples narrador. Da sua habilidade de fixar em dois ou três traços rápidos e felizes uma personagem, e retrato da Vidinha é o mais belo dos exemplos: Vidinha era uma mulatinha de 18 a 20 anos, de altura regular, ombros largos, peito alteado, cintura fina e pés pequeninos; tinha os olhos muitos pretos e muito vivos, os lábios grossos e húmidos, os dentes alvíssimos; a fala era um pouco descansada, doce e afinada.¹⁸

Brazilian critic Serpa finds many parallels between Almeida and the exemplar of Brazilian Realism, Machado de Assis:

Em Manuel de Almeida e Machado de Assis as recordações da infância, da escola, das gazetas, da palmatória, da igreja, das ruas da cidade com os seus costumes, dos homens com seus tiques e hábitos, de tudo, enfim, quanto povoava o passado,

17. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter VI, p. 148.

18. Manuel de Almeida is as one can see, much more than a simple narrator. From his ability to establish in two or three rapid and faithful strokes a person, and the portrayal of Vidinha is the best example: Vidinha was a little mulatta of between 18 and 20 years, medium height, large shoulders, high breasts, a thin waist and small feet; she had very dark and lively eyes, thick and moist lips, very white teeth; her speech was a little slow, sweet and refined. Phocion Serpa, "Manuel Antônio de Almeida", Revista Iberoamericana 9:18, (Mayo 1945): 345. Hereafter referred to as Serpa, Revista, p.

formam, entre êles, um encadeamento lógico, tao natural, que somente a mesma propriedade de observação e a mesma identidade de sentimento poderiam explicar Repentinamente, através da leitura das Memórias, a um boleio da frase, diante da maneira sugestiva e sutil de expor um fato, apropositar uma anedota, comentar uma atitude, ou fixar, de relance, o matiz psicológico de uma personagem apanhada de improviso num flagrante de alma, tem-se a impressão nítida de que Manuel de Almeida molhava a pena no mesmo tinteiro que iria servir a Machado de Assis. 19

Serpa further points out the similarity of Almeida's ability to finesse the reader's understanding of scenes to that of Machado de Assis. Almeida's writing subtly takes the reader along on Leonardo's life journey. The descriptions Almeida presents not only enliven the story, but also allow the reader to reach a deeper knowledge of the characters.

Almeida fits into another specialized form of Realism which portrays social customs. Latin American literary criticism frequently refers to this generally as

19. In Manuel Antônio de Almeida and Machado de Assis, the memories of youth, of school, of truancy, of the ferule, of church, of city streets with their costumes, of men with their idiosyncrasies and habits, of everything in short, explaining the past, form among them a logical chain, so natural that only the same propensity of observation and the same identity of feeling would explain it Suddenly, through reading of Memoirs, the packaging of the phrase, on top of the suggestive and subtle way of exposing a fact, proposing an anecdote, commenting on an attitude, or placing, by chance, the psychological shading of a person caught improvising in the spirit of the act. One has the clear impression that Manuel Antônio de Almeida dipped his pen in the same inkwell which would later serve Machado de Assis. Serpa, Revista, pp. 351-354.

costumbrismo.²⁰ In Memoirs, Almeida brings superb descriptive abilities to bear on Brazil's social customs during the early 1800's.

The first and most important societal segment Almeida describes is the political and governmental system. With the court and crown's move to Brazil, the legal system expanded. A most important person in this line was the bailiff. Almeida makes Leonardo-Pataca a bailiff; in fact, his nickname derives from his complaint that he only got 320 reis (a pataca) for his services. The bailiffs

enjoyed no small self-esteem . . . they were men fearful and feared, respectable and respected, they formed one of the ends of the formidable judicial chain, which then developed all of Rio de Janeiro in the days when claims and lawsuits were, among us, an integral part of life; the other extreme was formed by the judges of the appellate court. Now . . . meeting completed the circle in which took place the terrible combat of summons, legal petitions, principal and final arguments, and all those judicial stops.²¹

Apparently, Brazilians made frequent recourse to the legal system. Almeida introduces this litigious aspect of society through the character of Dona Maria:

she had one of the worst vices of that period and of those customs: it was the mania for lawsuits. As she was rich, Dona Maria nourished this vice fully; her lawsuits were the food of her very life . . . ²²

20. Coutinho, Introduction, p. 166, and Orlando Gómez-Gil, Historia Crítica de la Literatura Hispanoamericana: Desde los Orígenes hasta el Momento Actual, (New York: Holt, Reinhard and Winston, 1968), pp. 344-346.

21. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter I, p. 1.

22. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XVII, p. 88.

The legal system contained complexities and pitfalls for Brazilians who used it. Almeida noted lawsuits were expensive and onerous. Accepting a summons

. . . meant that one was beginning a long and wearisome journey, . . . during which one had to pay passage at an endless number of weigh stations: the solicitor, the barrister, the magistrate, the notary, the judge, inexorable charons, stood at the door with hands out.²³

While the legal system developed in a typically bureaucratic way, Rio remained primitive. In an offhanded way, Almeida reminds the reader of the rustic situation:

At that time the police of the city was not yet organized, or rather it was organized after a fashion in harmony with the tendencies and ideas of the time.²⁴

Of course, as well as a police force, a criminal element also existed. Almeida provides a description of the gypsies and hoodlums. Moreover, Almeida notes that

to be a ruffian, a hooligan, was once upon a time a trade in Rio de Janeiro: there were men who made a living from it. They would beat up a man for money and would go anywhere to start a riot on purpose, provided they were paid for it, whatever the outcome.²⁵

As to the gypsies in Brazil, Almeida notes that they arrived from Portugal along with other immigrants. He claims that they were

23. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter I, p. 2.

24. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter V, p. 23.

25. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XV, p. 75.

idle and unscrupulous folk, they won [in Brazil] the well deserved reputation of being the most consummate rascals; nobody with any sense would enter into a business deal with them . . . They brought only bad habits, sharp practices, and rascality . . . They lived in almost total idleness; they passed no night without a party. They dwelt ordinarily away from the main streets and enjoyed utter freedom.²⁶

All Brazil enjoyed parties and processions, not just the gypsies during Almeida's time. Almeida writes about two very important festivals occurring in Rio. The "goldsmith's procession" was extremely important to the people of Rio during the time period, if for no other reason than because of the Baianas who led the festival. These northern Brazilian women dressed in

only some few skirts fastened at the waist which came little below the calf of the leg, all of them ornamented with magnificent laces. From the waist up they wore no more than a very thin sort of blouse, the collar and cuffs of which were bordered with lace . . . They bedecked their heads with a kind of turban to which they gave the name of trunfa . . . their feet were shod with high-heeled backless slippers.²⁷

Almeida notes that religious celebrations were also very important and influential. The most important festival was that of the Holy Ghost. It officially began on Whitsunday, though the festival was not bounded by a calendar and began a week before the official beginning. For the week of the holiday all Rio celebrated.

26. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter VI, p. 29.

27. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XVII, pp. 86-87.

This religious event points out that the church served as a major socializing device. Masses attracted many of the women as it offered an environment conducive to conversation and gossip.

Almeida acknowledges the importance of gossip, a widespread aspect of Brazilian life. He mentions several times the speed with which information travelled. The day after Leonardo-Pataca's wife abandoned him and their son, the whole neighborhood knew that the woman had run off with the captain of a Portuguese ship.²⁸ Later, after Major Vidigal had arrested Leonardo-Pataca, a colleague happened to pass by and see him, and in a few hours the whole profession knew of Pataca's situation.²⁹ Almeida humorously incorporated this aspect of society.

Perhaps the most interesting of Almeida's descriptions of the customs and lifestyles of the people of Rio is how they got along together. Much nepotism and use of influence occurred.

Now in that day . . . the use of influence and the mutual obligations between parent and godparent, or godparents to each other, were a veritable mainspring in the whole machinery of society.³⁰

The parents and the godparents frequently used their influence for their children. The godmother and Luizinha's

28. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter II, p. 14.

29. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter V, pp. 26-27.

30. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XXII, p. 228.

mother used their influence to help Leonardo get his position as a sergeant.³¹ Another time the comadre visited a lieutenant colonel, whose son had seduced Leonardo's mother before coming to Brazil. The colonel felt a debt of honor to Leonardo's mother because of his son's transgressions, which he passed on to Leonardo.³²

Although Almeida claims

our customs in that period in regards to generosity and hospitality were not what one would call very laudable, . . .³³

the storyline contradicts him. When Leonardo runs away from home and ends up living at Vidinha's house,

Leonardo . . . was declared an adopted 'foundling' in the house of Tomaz da Sé, and there he remained, comfortably established. Let no one be surprised at the facility with which such things were done; . . . there was nothing commoner than for every household to have one, two, and sometimes more such dependents.³⁴

Clearly, the family unit was extremely important. By extending the family and adopting dependents, Brazilians strengthened the social fabric and structure. Parents and relations actively interceded for other family members.

Almeida's many descriptions of society have led Brazilian critics to consider Memoirs a treasure of colonial

31. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XVIII.

32. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter VIII.

33. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter VIII, p. 160.

34. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter X, p. 169.

cultural information, in a convenient, readable and enjoyable form:

Quanto aos costumes, de 1850 a 1860, já se sabe que essas páginas tomam os foros de um indicador precioso, de um verdadeiro album, florilégio ou aide-memoire, através dos quais ressuscitamos a taboada cantada, as palmatórias do mestre-escola, e do mestre de rezas, a gazeta dos escolares, as ceroulas curtas e largas, as mangas de presunto do vestuário feminino, as nove badaladas do sino grande da Sé, . . . Manuel de Almeida não se contenta de ser apenas um bateiador de fatos, pois é também, ao lado disso, um comentador dos maus costumes, da licenciosidade, da amoralidade e hipocrisia ambientes, e, a seu modo, um moralista. Ele usa, a cada passo, do ridendo castigat mores, e os exemplos, a esse respeito, são dignos de meditação e reparo.³⁵

A realist category closely related to costumbrismo is regionalism. Brazilian regionalist attempted to go beyond simple portraits of people to display an entire locality through the people and environment.³⁶ Memoirs admirably fulfills this task:

Manuel Antônio de Almeida era, também, um dos nossos primeiros regionalistas, a quem seduzem e embriagam as belezas da Terra em que nasceu.

35. As regards the customs from 1850 to 1860, it is already known that these pages form a precious indicator, an actual album, anthology, or aide-memoire, through which we may bring to life the ferule of the school master and of the prayer master, school truancy, short and long pants, the ham-like sleeves on women's dresses, the nine rings of the great bell at the cathedral, . . . Manuel de Almeida does not content himself by merely throwing out facts, he is also, a commentator on our customs, licentiousness, loves and the air of hypocrisy, he is in his own way, a moralist. He uses, at each moment a ridendo castigat mores, and the examples, in this respect are worthy of meditation and attention. Serpa, Revista, p. 343.

36. Coutinho, Introduction, pp. 171-175.

Escutai como êle inicia um dos capítulos do seu romance: "Chegaram todos depois de um longo caminhar e quando já brilhava nos céus um dêsses luare~~s~~s magníficos que só fazem no Rio de Janeiro . . ."37

Critics recognize in Memoirs an expression of the life of Rio de Janeiro inhabitants, or in Portuguese a vida carioca. Memoirs " . . . começam a reflectir direito o meio e os typos cariocas, com um dom realista simplesmente divinatório, . . ."38 In fact the critic Soares Amora found that Memoirs ". . . é excelente pelo que tem de real, de densidade humana, de estilo comunicativo, e pelo que reconstrói da vida carioca num plano social . . ."39 Almeida offers the social historian a virtual encyclopedia of information about the people of Rio and the period of the Kingdom:

[Memórias] . . . são um dos mais autênticos retratos do Brasil colonial, não somente pela pintura em que excele o engenho do seu autor, mas pela abundância, pela fartura, pela riqueza extraordinária de motivos e informações inerentes

37. Manuel Antônio de Almeida was, also, one of our first regionalists, one who was seduced and intoxicated by the land where he was born. Listen to how he begins a chapter of his novel: "When they arrived after their long walk, the moon shone down on them magnificently as only happens in Rio de Janeiro . . ." Serpa, Revista, p. 345.

38. " . . . begins to reflect directly on the carioca environment and people, with a simply divine realist gift, . . . " Agrippino Grieco, Evolução da Prosa Brasileira, (Rio de Janeiro: Ariel, 1932), p. 46.

39. ". . . is excellent in its realism, in its human density, in its style of communication, and in its reconstruction of the vida carioca on a social level . . ." Soares Amora, Historia, p. 67.

à nossa demopsicologia. Evidentemente, essa era a intenção do autor ao se arriscar em assunto de investigação, mais ou menos histórica. . . . A demopsicologia é, por assim dizer, a alma dêsse livro . . . [Memórias são] um compêndio, ou, melhor, o espelho da alma primitiva do nosso povo, naquele período colonial.⁴⁰

As Marques pointed out: Almeida's style is

. . . quasi fotográfico, . . . guarda toda a aparência de um testemunho presencial; e aquilo que, no livro, não passa de simples retrospectão, adquire no espírito do leitor o sainete da observação direta.⁴¹

Although Almeida provides a lodestone to colonial Rio, Memoirs remains foremost a novel. Almeida describes the period well, but some critics have questioned his objective abilities:

Quem o lê, desprevenido, está sujeito a deslizar em equívocos, como sucedeu ao brilhante autor da Pequena Historia da Literatura Brasileira, julgando-o um guia seguro para quem queira conhecer "os costumes das nossas classes médias entre 1850 e 1860" . . . [Almeida evoca] entre 50 e 60, tipos e costumes de uma camada inferior da sociedade

40. [Memoirs] . . . is one of the most authentic representations of colonial Brazil, not only because of the style in which the author excels, but also because of the abundance, because of the plentifulness, because of the extraordinary richness of the motives and inherent information of our mass psychology. Evidently, this was the intention of the author in risking more or less historical investigation, . . . The mass psychology is the heart of this book . . . [Memoirs is] a compendium or better yet, a mirror of the primitive soul of our people, in the colonial period. Serpa, Revista, pp. 345-346.

41. . . . is almost photographic, . . . it takes all the appearance of being eyewitness testimony; it is that in the book, not any more than simple retrospection, which inspires in the spirit of the reader the feeling of direct observation. Marques, Tradicionalismo, p. 8.

colonial carioca, reconstituiu-a com tal flagrância que induz a gente a subverter a cronologia.⁴²

Almeida's writing style can lead to a false sense of security regarding the absolute historical accuracy of Memoirs. Nonetheless, Almeida's occasional lapses may be considered literary license.

Besides providing a convenient, if only partial, guide to colonial Rio de Janeiro, Almeida also presents an accurate rendering of colonial speech. An important manifestation of Realism is the nationalization of the language. Realism incorporated popular phraseology and regional expressions into literature as the authors tried to reproduce the native speech and its influence in the work. Almeida broke away from classical Portuguese grammatical patterns and included language and syntax typical of the period.

Much textual and critical support exists to classify Memoirs as a work belonging to the Brazilian realistic period. The descriptions, the themes and general social

42. He who reads it unwarily, is subject to slip into mistakes, as happened to the brilliant author of Peguesa Historia da Literatura Brasileira [Ronaldo de Carvalho], judging it to be a secure guide for whoever wishes to know "the customs of our middle class between 1850 and 1860" . . . [Almeida calls forth] between 50 and 60 types and costumes of the lower strata of colonial carioca society, he reconstructed it with such ability that it induces people to subvert chronology. Xavier Marques, "O Tradicionalismo de Manuel Antônio de Almeida", Letras Academicas, (Rio de Janeiro: Renascença Editora, 1933), pp. 7-8. Hereafter referred to as Marques, Tradicionalismo, p.

commentary of the work seem to memorialize Rio as only
Realism could.

CHAPTER 4

MEMOIRS AND THE PICARESQUE NOVEL

Critics have considered Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant to be both realist and romantic. Certainly Memoirs contains elements of both literary divisions; however, critics have also called Almeida's book picaresque. The picaresque story is an Iberian creation that had its roots with the early anonymous Spanish short story Lazarillo de Tormes. The term picaresque derives from the Spanish pícaro or "rogue." Lazarillo initiated a new kind of humorous, entertaining, and original story.¹

The picaresque novel gave a realistic vision to a whole age, and popularized a large social class by focusing on the lower strata of society.² As Freire explains, the pícaro is:

. . . um moço roto e mal vestido, vagabundo e mandrião, sem respeito à propriedade alheia, censor da estrutura y funções sociais, pessimista porém

1. B. Cejador y Frauca, La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes y de sus fortunas y adversidades, (Madrid: Clásicos Castellanos, Espasa-Calpe, 1941), p. 17.

2. Spanish literary historian, E. Gómez de Basquero emphasized the picaresque characteristic of societal and custom observations in his El renacimiento de la novela española en el siglo XIX, (Madrid: Editorial Mundo Latino, 1924), p. 27.

de bom humor, supersticioso ou devoto, homem de ânimo e paciência, sofrido nas adversidades, afeiçoado ao vinho, menosprezador da honra, amante da liberdade . . .³

After the publication and popularization of Lazarillo de Tormes, the picaresque novel appeared throughout European and American literature. A brief scan of these literatures reveals such works as: Smollett, Roderick Randon; Fielding, Tom Jones; Le Sage, Gil Blas; and Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, all of which reflect picaresque influences. As Northup, in his Introduction to Spanish Literature, comments, "[while] . . . Spain, in a sense, inaugurated it, crystallized it and furnished the model," the pícaro and the picaresque theme have become international and universal.⁴

Several characteristics distinguish the picaresque novel.⁵ A picaresque work is usually biographical or autobiographical in scope. It focuses on the life of a mischievous rogue as he works his way through to the end of the

3. . . . a tattered and poorly dressed youth, a vagabond and an idler, without respect for anyone's property, a critic of the society's structure and functions, a pessimist although good-humored, superstitious or devout, a man of spirit and patience who has suffered adversity, devoted to wine, scornful of honor, a lover of liberty . . . Freiro, Lazarillo, p. 69.

4. George Tyler Northup, An Introduction to Spanish Literature, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 167. Hereafter cited as Northup, Introduction, p.

5. General characteristics of the picaresque novel are taken from Roman Zylawy, "Picaresque Novel" (mimeograph prepared for a 1986 course at the University of Montana).

story. The main character belongs to the lower classes of the society, and has somewhat unconventional moral standards.

Many of the characteristics of the picaresque novel appear in Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant. As Brazilian critic Freire claims:

É um autêntico romance [sic, romance] picaresco, manifestação tardia de um gênero que cederá o lugar ao romance romântico em suas várias modalidades.⁶

Moreover, Eugênio Gomes notes similarities between Memoirs' hero Leonardo and the hero of the first Spanish picaresque novel Lazarillo de Tormes.⁷

E é o que ocorre nas "Memórias de um sargento de milícias", cujo personagem principal -- o endiabrado Leonardo -- tem evidente parentesco espiritual com o astucioso e não menos doudivanas Lázaro.⁸

6. [It is] an authentic picaresque novel, a late manifestation of a genre which had yielded its position to the romantic novel in its various attributes. Eduardo Freire, "Do Lazarillo de Tormes ao Filho do Leonardo Pataca," Kriterion, (January - June, 1954): 74. Hereafter cited as Freire, Lazarillo, p.

7. Certainly the most important, if not the first of the picaresque novels. It was written anonymously and first published in Antwerp, Burgos and Alcala in 1554. An English translation is included in Two Spanish Picaresque Novels, tr. Michael Alpert (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1975).

8. That is what occurs in Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant, whose principal character -- the bedeviled Leonardo -- has evident spiritual ties with the cunning and not less sly Lázaro. Eugênio Gomes, Aspectos do Romance Brasileiro, (Salvador: Publicações da Universidade da Bahia, 1958), p. 63. Hereafter referred to as Gomes, Aspectos, p.

Gomes finds another similarity between characters in the two works: Lazarillo's first patron and the prayer master in Memoirs are both blind.⁹ Unfortunately no other parallels exist between the two characters. However, as both Gomes and Freiro point out, relatively few other Brazilian commentators recognize the many picaresque characteristics which appear in Memoirs.¹⁰

Picaresque novels have little integrated story line. As Northup stated: "There is no well-knit plot, only a series of disconnected adventures. One may begin or cease reading anywhere."¹¹ The pícaro's adventures form the story's basis. The picaresque novel frustrates readers seeking logical, progressive plot development, as the picaresque story has little, if any climax.

This characteristic exists in Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant. Almeida leads the reader on a tour of Leonardo's adventures, but without a sense of an impending zenith, or even serious tension building. Memoirs has a plot, but

9. Gomes, Aspectos, p. 64.

10. Among the Brazilians who have mentioned the comparison are: Mario de Andrade, who according to Gomes was the first to note the resemblance between Memoirs and other picaresque works. See Gomes, Aspectos, p. 61. Other commentators include Freiro, Gomes and Alceu Amoroso Lima, in his Quadro Sintético de Literatura Brasileira, who notes that although Almeida's Memoirs clearly include picaresque elements the work is part of the Romanticist period. See Alceu Amoroso Lima, Quadro Sintético da Literatura Brasileira, (Rio de Janeiro: Edições de ouro, 1969), p. 42.

11. Northup, Introduction, p. 169.

rather than an integrated story line, several individual stories having the same protagonist make up the novel. Almeida loosely ties the stories together, with no overwhelming conflict, main goal or overarching problem appearing. Instead, the crisis points are anti-climatic and fairly incredible.

The main character in the picaresque story is the "trickster" who borders on being a villainous lawbreaker. As Northup explained:

The pícaro deserves condemnation for his refusal to accept useful employment, but merits sympathy as the victim of a pernicious social organization.¹²

This theme of the self-indulgent opportunist and the cruel society plays an important role in the picaresque novel. The author must maintain a fine line between excusable and inexcusable actions to produce such a work successfully. The picaresque hero cannot act so culpably as to alienate the reader completely, nor can the society be so helpful to the pícaro as to destroy the work's theme.

With a story lacking an integrated plot, the protagonist, the mischievous pícaro himself, becomes the most important characteristic of the picaresque novel. As Northup suggested: "The personality of the anti-hero is the only bond of unity."¹³ In Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant, that

12. Northup, Introduction, p. 168.

13. Northup, Introduction, p. 169.

character is Leonardo. Almeida reports early on that Leonardo is a mischievous person:

. . . he was as intractable as he could possibly be. As soon as he could walk and talk he became a scourge; he broke and tore everything that came into his hand . . . [his mother] Maria never spared him. [Nevertheless,] his tricks would begin again, as soon as the smart of the spanking subsided.¹⁴

After both his parents abandoned him, Leonardo lived with his godfather.¹⁵ There, his mischievous pranks continued, and perhaps worsened. Yet in spite of all his mischief, his godfather loved him, even when

Sometimes, sitting in the [barber] shop, he would amuse himself by making faces at the customers while they were being shaved. Some got furious, others would laugh involuntarily; from which it turned out that they would often leave with their faces nicked, to the great pleasure of the boy and the discredit of his godfather the barber.¹⁶

At home,

. . . he would throw stones at neighbors' roofs; he disputed with anyone who passed or was in nearby windows so that nobody around there had any love for him.¹⁷

The first day of school the boy misbehaved and the teacher palm-spanked him with a ferule. This disciplinary

14. Manuel Antônio de Almeida, Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant, tr. Linton L. Barrett (Washington: Pan American Union, 1959), Part I, Chapter II, p. 7. Hereafter cited as Almeida, Memoirs, Part, Chapter, p.

15. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter III.

16. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter III, p. 16.

17. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter III, p. 16.

device was a circular paddle with five holes in the shape of a cross. Leonardo reacted predictably: " . . . from that instant, he declared unremitting war on the school."¹⁸ With great difficulties, the godfather managed to keep Leonardo in school for two years. He continually misbehaved and took great delight in doing just the opposite of what the teacher asked. His classmates regarded him "as the most artful scoundrel; he sold to his schoolmates all that might have any value, whether it was his own or someone else's."¹⁹ He later began to skip school and attend church. Leonardo converted, not for religion, but rather because church constituted the social gathering place at the time.

While at church, he made friends with an altar boy who had the same knavish outlook on life.

As a proof of decided friendship, his companion entrusted to our truant an altar candle snuffer, and together they did the service and played their knavish tricks: the least they did was to go from altar to altar draining all the cruets of the drops of wine remaining which inflamed further their desire to play more pranks.²⁰

Leonardo told his godfather of his interest in church. This delighted the godfather, since a church career represented one way a young man could better himself. While the godfather rejoiced, Leonardo was thinking of the pranks

18. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XII, p. 59.

19. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XIII, p. 62.

20. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XIII, p. 63.

he could play. Leonardo enjoyed going to the church to "have the whole church for himself and his friend, to suffocate in waves of incense smoke the face of whatever old woman happened to be next to him on the occasion of mass."²¹

Leonardo's roguish behavior continued throughout his life. Although Leonardo's behavior may have deserved some sanction, his eventual punishment is harsher than necessary. Leonardo had left home and was living with the family of his old friend from his altar boy years. As time passed, he became infatuated with a cousin, Vidinha, who returned his affection. Unfortunately another cousin also had amorous designs on the girl, and jealously conceived a plot to remove Leonardo from the scene by reporting him to Chief of Police Major Vidigal. At his first opportunity, Major Vidigal arrested and drafted Leonardo into the army.²² Thus Almeida completes the picaresque paradox: while Leonardo deserved censure for many of his actions, the punishment he received did not fit the crime. This paradox also highlights the important picaresque characteristic of social criticism. Almeida presents the problem of an unjust and sometimes cruel world.

The picaresque novel uses satire and irony to provide much of the amusement and social criticism. This critique

21. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XIII, p. 64.

22. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XI, p. 174.

extends even to lampooning contemporary literary norms. Almeida may be criticizing Romanticism by satirizing French romanticist Stendal's The Red and the Black. In both Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant and The Red and the Black, the military and clergy offer opportunities to improve the protagonist's lot in life. However, while Stendal's hero Julien uses the clergy and military to improve his social position, Leonardo uses them to provide opportunities for further self-amusement.

Almeida's social criticism extends to the medical profession. During the story's era, a ship's barber frequently performed any medical duties. The barber in Memoirs, Leonardo's godfather, served on board a slave ship before establishing himself in Rio de Janeiro. Shipboard surgery consisted mainly of bleeding a patient. Through luck, the barber had a high success rate; when he bled a person, the patient survived.²³ The barber cared about his patients, but fate offered the barber an opportunity to gain enough money to retire from seagoing life. The ship's captain had fallen seriously ill, and although the barber bled and treated him, the illness worsened. On his death bed, the captain entrusted the barber with a large sum of money to deliver to his wife and child. The captain died, believing the fortune of his wife and daughter secure in the barber's

23. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter IX, p. 42.

hand. The barber decided that he could put the money to much better use by taking it for his own purposes.

Almeida attacks the medical profession once more, and thus emphasizes Memoirs' irony. Later in life, the barber became seriously ill. The comadre suggested a treatment of rosemary baths,²⁴ but when the baths failed to relieve the sickness, the family called an apothecary. The druggist prescribed some medicine, over the comadre's protests. Three days later the barber died -- medical science failed to keep him alive. Although the barber had used medicine to his great profit, it could not help him live to enjoy the gains.

Perhaps the most traditional social critique in the picaresque novel concerns the hypocrisy of religion. Memoirs consistently reproaches the priesthood. Almeida finds fault with two particular aspects of the clergy: the contradictory stance regarding celibacy, and the apparent lack of concern with spreading an understanding of the Bible.

The clergy's morality comes under attack when a local priest, who outwardly professes piety and dignity, takes a mistress. As Almeida notes:

The liturgy director was a priest of middle age.
. . . externally, he was a complete Saint Francis
of Catholic austerity, inside . . . a confirmed
libertine . . . he was a preacher who always

24. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter V, p. 142.

sought as his subject decorum and corporal chastity in every sense of the terms; yet inwardly he was as sensual as a follower of Mohammed.²⁵

Almeida combines his critiques of the Catholic Church when the liturgy director arrives late for a major sermon. Leonardo, typically, had told the priest the sermon would begin late. When the director neglected to show up on time and the urgency mounted, an Italian Capuchin friar mounted the pulpit with a "Capisco . . . A la Necessitá!"²⁶ The friar attempted to say mass, but in Italian. Since few of the congregation spoke anything other than Portuguese, the mass became an unintelligible gibberish. When the liturgy director did arrive, crimson with rage, both clergymen delivered their sermons at the same time, since neither wished to relinquish the pulpit to the other. After the sermon the liturgy director attacked Leonardo and the other altar boy for having misinformed him. They replied that they had told him the proper time, and that the woman the director had been with could confirm their story. Of course, the liturgy director could not continue the argument. The story is entertaining and humorous, but it points out the hypocrisy and implies an insensitivity by the priesthood to the congregation.

25. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XIV, p. 67.

26. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XIV, p. 70.

Another typical picaresque feature is the focus on lower classes. The major characters in Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant belong to this section of society, providing ideal protagonists. In spite of Leonardo's father being a bailiff, Almeida clearly indicates that Leonardo belonged to a poorer class. Both his parents originally came from Portugal and met on the ship crossing to Brazil.²⁷ The courtship ritual was rather crude and involved their stepping on each other's toes. Upon their arrival in Rio de Janeiro, Maria, Leonardo's mother, was pregnant. The relationship did not have the sanction of marriage. Maria was a peasant, or as Almeida puts it, "a rustic wench." Almeida even goes so far as to describe Maria's style of dress in detail:

. . . women of the lower classes of the country dressed with a skirt of blue gingham over a cotton print dress, a white kerchief folded triangularly on her head and fastened under her chin, and a pair of heavy shoes on her feet.²⁸

Even Leonardo's godfather was a relatively poor man who got his barbershop through the stolen legacy of a ship's captain.²⁹ Consequently, Leonardo definitely belongs to the lower strata of the society. Although he has influential benefactors of higher classes, he represents the poor.

27. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter I, p. 3.

28. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter I, p. 4.

29. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter IX, p. 44.

Interestingly enough, many picaresque novels involve the hero marrying or becoming involved in some other social institution. The pícaro thus has a golden opportunity to establish himself in a stable home life and conventional success. Frequently the protagonist takes the chance and settles down. However, the protagonist conforms for appearance's sake only, and for social convenience. In short order, the pícaro's nature reasserts itself, forgetting stability and personal progress for another adventure.

Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant presents two such opportunities for redemption. The first occurs when Leonardo is conscripted. After being drafted, he seemed to change. He conformed to the rigid discipline and eventually reached the rank of corporal. However, Leonardo's roguish self resurfaces when Major Vidigal is caricaturized by Teotonio at a party. Vidigal orders Leonardo to apprehend the major offender.³⁰ The major did not want to arrest Teotonio during the festivities due to the difficulty in capturing him. Leonardo is ordered to enter the house and to signal the police company when Teotonio left. Leonardo went in the house, but rather than signal, he informed Teotonio of the trap outside, warning him to leave imitating a hunchback. Leonardo then signaled the Major and the police when someone else exited. All went well until

30. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XX, p. 218.

someone complimented Leonardo on saving Teotonio. The Major realized the trick and disciplined Leonardo severely.³¹

Leonardo's marriage to Luizinha represents his second opportunity to change. Almeida indicates that Leonardo's life settled into a more stable and conventional pattern.³² Leonardo received a discharge from the grenadiers and was appointed as a sergeant of the militia. He also obtained his godfather's inheritance. His marriage seems to succeed, and Leonardo has contentment and peace. However Almeida concludes the work before Leonardo permanently mends his picaresque ways.

The picaresque novel stresses realism in order to describe the pícaro's adventures. The language is vivid, the descriptions are realistic, and the dialogue employs the vernacular. The picaresque appears very similar to modern Realism in its stylistic approach. As Freire points out:

O realismo é velho como o homem. Não vamos demonstrá-lo evocando precedentes remotos numa visão panorâmica do passado. Fixemos um ponto: o do realismo na literatura moderna, e eis-nos em meados do século XVI quando surge a nova sintaxe narrativa da picaresca espanhola, com a sua pintura satírica de tipos e costumes sociais . . . Este realismo, é claro, nada tem que ver com o realismo ou naturalismo frances do século XIX, condicionado pelo espírito científico.³³

31. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XXI, p. 223.

32. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XXV.

33. Realism is as old as man. We will not demonstrate this by evoking remote precedents in a panoramic vision of the past. Let us fix a point: the beginning of realism in

The picaresque focus highlights the environmental descriptions almost to the detriment of other important features such as plot and character growth.

Almeida achieves this descriptive realism excellently. When he describes the prayer master, the reader can imagine being in the blind man's presence, learning as he taught. The students were taught in a semi-circle, repeating in chorus after the master:

. . . the students repeated the same from beginning to end, in a manner which was neither speaking nor singing, of course interrupted from time to time at each mistake by the corresponding palm spankings. After one prayer came another, and so on until the lesson ended with the chanted litany to the virgin.³⁴

Those students unlucky enough to err in the recitation faced the ferule, "the sole compendium by which he taught his pupils."³⁵ The descriptions almost cause the reader's palm to sting.

At Memoirs' beginning, Almeida introduces the reader to the comadre. The description used invokes fond memories of a favorite aunt or grandmother,

modern literature, and that places us in the middle of the sixteenth century when the new narrative syntax of the Spanish picaresque novel arose with its satirical portrayal of social types and customs. . . . This realism, it is clear has nothing to do with French realism or naturalism of the nineteenth century, conditioned by the scientific spirit. Frieiro, Lazariho, pp. 77-78.

34. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter IV, pp. 137-138.

35. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter IV, p. 137.

. . . a short woman, exceedingly fat, kindly, ingenuous or gullible up to a certain point, and shrewd up to another; she lived by her trade of midwife, which she adopted out of courtesy, and pronounced blessings against the evil eye; all knew her as very pious and as the most fanatically assiduous church goer in the city.³⁶

The depiction of scenery in Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant calls forth a host of sensory reactions, as when Almeida describes the house of a lesser noble:

. . . the dust that had accumulated on the cords of the door-shutter and the weather-beaten walls gave the house a gloomy look as on the outside; as for the interior, it was on the same order. The drawing room was small and made in the old-fashioned taste: all the pieces were enormous and heavy; the chairs and the couch, with arched legs and very high backs, had seats of leather, which was the fashion of the transition between cloth upholstery and cane . . . the walls were ornamented by a dozen pictures, or rather, boxes of glass which displayed inside them landscapes and flowers made of tiny shells of all colors, which were not completely ugly . . .³⁷

The reader can almost taste the dusty, dingy air in the oppressing and depressing surroundings.

Almeida's writing ability truly makes Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant a memorable and enjoyable work. His descriptions and use of the vernacular captivate the reader. Almeida's talents make Memoirs such a good story that the reader does not even notice that the hero goes unnamed until almost halfway through the book.³⁸

36. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter VII, p. 33.

37. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter X, pp. 49-50.

38. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter XVIII, p. 94.

Although many elements of Romanticism and Realism appear in Memoirs, many picaresque characteristics also are present. In fact, Freiro claims that the only element of the picaresque missing is the autobiographical style usually present.

Manuel Antônio de Almeida publicou o seu romance anônimamente -- pormenor que se pode chamar genérico da picaresca --, primeiro no Correio Mercantil e, depois, em livro com a simples declaração de ser de Um Brasileiro. Só lhe faltou narrar em forma autobiográfica, conforme a regra (confirmada por muitas exceções), as memórias do protagonista, um anti-herói, como o pícaro.³⁹

The romanticist elements give the work greater emotional depth and an overall sense of direction. The major themes, other than Leonardo's life story, result from romanticist influences. Leonardo's love affairs with Vidinha and Luizinha, as well as his ultimate ability to overcome adversity to achieve a stable and successful life, all take their subjects from Romanticism.

The novel's realistic elements give clearer insight to the city and people. The description of the liturgy director, the description of Vidinha, the actions climaxing in Leonardo's arrest by Major Vidigal, Almeida's critical des-

39. Manuel Antônio de Almeida Published his novel anonymously -- a detail one may call generic to the picaresque --, first in the Correio Mercantil and, later in book form with the simple declaration of being, A Brazilian. The only thing missing is to have narrated the work in an autobiographical form, for the book to conform to the rule (confirmed by many exceptions), of the memoirs of the protagonist, an anti-hero, as the pícaro. Freiro, *Lazarillo*, p. 81.

criptions of the church and other social institutions, all provide an enriched understanding of life in Rio de Janeiro. Almeida's descriptive skill shows important and beneficial influences from Realism.

The classifications of Romanticism and Realism influence the novel. However in Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant, Almeida also successfully incorporates the Iberian picaresque into the 19th century Brazilian novel.

CHAPTER 5

MEMOIRS OF A MILITIA SERGEANT AS SOCIAL HISTORY

One fundamental value of Memoirs is its insight into the Brazilian consciousness and history. If the survey made by the Brazilian Academia is any indication, Brazilians consider Almeida's book essential to an understanding of Brazil. Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant is an historical novel very faithful to past mores and customs, providing an important historical bridge to colonial Brazil.

Almeida captures many essential Brazilian qualities in Memoirs, both of the colonial period and his own. Although very diversified, Brazilian reality has much fatalism. Historical, geographic and economic conditions have contributed to the fatality found throughout Brazilian literature. The works of Graciliano Ramos attest to this fatality, as do the psychological novels of Rachel de Quierós and Machado de Assis.¹

Brazilian critics disagree on the historical accuracy of Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant. Some consider it to be a

1. See Érico Veríssimo, Brazilian Literature: An Outline (New York: MacMillan Co., 1945), Chapter 5, pp. 55-73.

virtual encyclopedia of colonial Brazil.² Others find that while Almeida covers many customs and conventions of earlier times, at places he is inaccurate.³ As previously noted, Memoirs' novelistic approach justifies some bending of history. Although the characters are fictional, each one probably represents a composite counterpart in actual Brazilian history. One notable exception is Major Vidigal, an actual historical figure.⁴ Unfortunately, available records seem incomplete as to Vidigal's actual activities and character.

Memoirs presents historically believable scenes. The personae of the school master, prayer master, and governmental functionaries all appear to have been based on historical reality. Almeida does not overestimate the importance of the church or superstition. Mass fulfilled an important socializing function, while witch doctors and midwives served to help belay the doubts of the faithful and not-so-faithful. Just as in most Latin American nations, family life formed the basic unifying and identifying component. In a society having a relatively inefficient bureaucracy, family patronage and nepotism took on greater importance.

2. Ronaldo de Carvalho, Pequena História da Literatura Brasileira, (Rio de Janeiro: Briquet, 1919), p. 149.

3. Xavier Marques, "O Tradicionalismo de Manuel Antônio de Almeida", Letras Acadêmicas, (Rio de Janeiro: Renascença Editora, 1933), p. 8. Hereafter referred to as Marques, Tradicionalismo, p.

4. Marques, Tradicionalismo, p. 9.

Almeida demonstrates virtually all the major societal structures.

Furthermore, Almeida presents hints of other historically accurate views, easily understood by a Brazilian readership but little known outside of Brazil. Leonardo's great fear is of conscription. One of Memoirs's characters even threatens Leonardo, wishing he be drafted. Thus Almeida accurately reflected the state of the nation both during the historical time period and probably even during the time Almeida wrote.

The threat of conscription Almeida put forth was a real fear for many Brazilians. Few may wish to fight in a war, but novels frequently romanticize a soldier's life. As Almeida asserts, the lot of a Brazilian soldier was poor. Inefficiency, logistical and staff problems, and poor living conditions plagued the Brazilian army. So many difficulties faced the Brazilians that when Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil later united to defeat Paraguay, the Brazilian government had to overhaul its military machine completely.⁵ Almeida had compelling reasons to make conscription and military life a threat to Leonardo.

5. The Brazilians bore the brunt of the Paraguayan war effort. Even with the military update the combined nations were hard pressed to defeat Paraguay. When Paraguay finally surrendered, the male population had been almost completely decimated. C. H. Haring, Empire in Brazil: A New World Experiment with Monarchy (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 81-83. Hereafter cited as Haring, Empire, p.

When the crown held court in Rio de Janeiro during the late colonial period, imperial struggles with Spain and territorial expansion were constant themes. The conflicts had existed for centuries, ever since the division of the new world by the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494). Inaccuracy in geographical measurement defied using the arbitrary dividing line to separate Portuguese and Spanish colonial possessions, thus both nations vied for more territory.⁶

The 1810 declarations of independence in Spanish America opened the door for Portuguese expansion in the new world, particularly in the viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata. Loyal Spanish garrisons faced a dual attack: a rebellious town council in Buenos Aires and the veteran Portuguese troops accompanying the royal family. Ultimately one of its own officers, José Gervasio Artigas, betrayed the Spanish garrison. He dreamed of uniting the former viceroyalty of La Plata into a federated democracy.⁷

For a time, Artigas successfully imposed his vision of a federation on various of the "United Provinces" (present day Argentina). However the strain of continued fighting took its toll, weakening the soldiery under Artigas. Seeing

6. Hubert Herring, A History of Latin America, 3rd ed. (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1968), pp. 225-226. Hereafter referred to as Herring, History, p.

7. See Washington Reyes Abadie, Artigas y el federalismo en el Río de la Plata, Historia Uruguaya, vol. 2, (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1978).

the opportunity, the Portuguese crown ordered an invasion into Uruguayan territory.⁸

In 1814, Portuguese troops used a pincer movement to push Artigas' forces back along the Paraná, forcing a confrontation with Buenos Aires. This spelled eventual defeat for Artigas. Quickly, the Portuguese established their rule in the area, renaming it the Cisplatine province.⁹

Portugal's rapid victory, however, did not mean a secure victory. The Portuguese overlords faced frequent civil unrest in the area. The maintenance of this conquest drained the Portuguese crown of revenue and manpower. Not only did the Banda Oriental contain patriots wishing independence, but Buenos Aires caudillos also coveted the land.¹⁰ Brazil ultimately relinquished its control, but not

8. Herring, History, p. 280.

9. The expansion to the south was at least partially motivated by the desire of Queen Carlota, wife to João IV and sister of Spanish king Ferdinand VII to protect her brother's new world possessions. She attempted to force the Banda Oriental and Buenos Aires to recognize her regency. Herring, History, p. 280.

10. Thirty-three of these patriots who had been in Buenos Aires forced the issue when in 1825 they invaded the Banda Oriental in an effort to liberate it. The congress at Buenos Aires followed by declaring the Banda Oriental part of the United Provinces. Of course this engendered a war with Brazil. The fighting was inconclusive, but in 1828, Great Britain intervened economically, forcing both Argentina and Brazil to recognize Uruguayan independence. Herring, History, p. 21.

until after a three year armed conflict with the United Provinces.¹¹

Almeida also knew of other armed disputes. Brazil constantly found itself at odds with Paraguay dictators Francia and Solano over expansion into the interior of Brazil. Moreover, Almeida could merely look to the United Provinces for other examples. The dictator Juan Manuel de las Rosas governed Argentina with an iron fist. His influence and force, when necessary, overwhelmed political opposition. The Rosas regime of repression and even terror finally inspired one of Rosas' own generals to rise against him. Justo José de Urquiza, with many volunteers from Brazil, Buenos Aires, Uruguay and other of the provinces, defeated Rosas, ending the reign of terror.¹²

Another topic, although less emphasized by Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant than that of conscription, is the conflict between native born Brazilian Portuguese and peninsular born Portuguese. Throughout the colonial period, few important

11. See Alfredo Castellanos, La cisplatina, la independencia y la república, Historia Uruguaya, Vol. 3 (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1974), pp. 34-39. Hereafter referred to as Castellanos, La cisplatina, p.

12. Rosas used corn as a symbol of his party, however the fearless in Buenos Aires changed the pronunciation from mazorca (corn) to más horca (more gallows). The Rosas period is well described, although not without bias, by Sarmiento in Domingo F. Sarmiento, Life in the Argentine Republic in the Days of the Tyrants; or, Civilization and Barbarism, tr. Mary Mann (London: Macmillan Publishers, reprint of the 1868 edition). See also Herring, History, pp. 703-714.

governmental positions in the new world went to native creoles. The crown acted on a two-fold rationale in its policy of favoring Portuguese born. The crown reinforced the mercantilistic economy by placing persons whose interests would most naturally lie with the mother country. This ideally ensured compliance with crown import and export regulations. Also, the crown could sell colonial posts to raise revenue. The marked preference for Portuguese to staff administrative positions irritated colonial natives.¹³

The Portuguese crown's relocation to Rio de Janeiro exacerbated this conflict between old and new world Portuguese. Relatively few native born Brazilians occupied high ranking positions at court. Almeida describes the Portuguese officialdom in several sections of Memoirs, particularly through the views of Leonardo-Pataca and in his chapter, "The Patio of the Rare Birds."¹⁴

Leonardo-Pataca's, father to Memoirs' protagonist Leonardo, views clearly exhibit a pro-Portuguese bias. Leonardo-Pataca originally moved to Brazil to take advantage

13. A.J.R. Russell-Wood, "Preconditions and precipitants of the Independence Movement in Portuguese America" and Stuart B. Schwartz, "Elite Politics and the Growth of a Peasantry in Late Colonial Brazil" in From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil, ed. A. J. R. Russell-Wood (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 22-30 and 143 respectively.

14. Manuel Antônio de Almeida, Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant, tr. Linton L. Barrett (Washington: Pan American Union, 1959), Part I, Chapter VIII, p. 37. Hereafter cited as Almeida, Memoirs, Part, Chapter, p.

of the new world colony and improve his condition. Almeida points out that Leonardo-Pataca had been a "cheap tailor in his native Lisbon," on moving to Brazil he became a bailiff, thoroughly abusing his position of power.¹⁵ Leonardo exploited his Brazilian opportunities. Leonardo-Pataca's regard for native Brazilians becomes apparent when the comadre attempts to convince him to give up chasing Portuguese women and settle down with a Brazilian. Leonardo simply replies "No. I don't care for these people."¹⁶ At great length, the comadre persuades Leonardo of Brazilian merit and he ends up living with her daughter.

The "patio of the rare birds" was a specific location in the palace occupied by high ranking officers.

. . . every day of the year it was occupied by three or four superior officers, old men incapacitated for war and useless in peace . . . Very seldom was there any occasion for their being summoned by royal order for anything, and they spent all their time in saintly idleness, either mute and silent or conversing about matters of their day and censuring the things which they rightly supposed were no longer of their time, because none of them was under sixty years old. Sometimes it happened that they all dozed off at the same time, and then with the resonance of their breathing passing through their tobacco-stained nostrils they would tune up a quartet, a priceless spectacle . . .¹⁷

While humorously told, the passage also criticized the

15. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter I, p. 3.

16. Almeida, Memoirs, Part II, Chapter XVI, p. 83.

17. Almeida, Memoirs, Part I, Chapter VIII, p. 37.

practice of providing sinecures to high ranking Portuguese officers.

Almeida portrayed the conflict between Brazilian and Portuguese very strongly through a clash between Memoirs' characters: Leonardo is Brazilian, while those who control most of his future are natives of Portugal. His father, who threw him out of the home, was Portuguese, as were Major Vidigal and in all probability the prayer master, school-teacher, and priests. Even if these last three were not born in Portugal, they must have received their education there, as Brazil had no universities until just a few years before independence.¹⁸

Almeida creates two key situations in which Leonardo is contented: his love affairs with Luizinha and Vidinha. Each of these characters was most likely a native of Brazil. Vidinha appears Brazilian due to the description of her home life and her mulatto heritage, Luizinha, as her family seems very well established in Brazil.

Almeida thus establishes a general pattern: when Leonardo deals with native Portuguese, he frequently finds himself troubled and unhappy. Leonardo finds happiness, however, when he has relationships with native Brazilians. Perhaps Almeida did not intend to demonstrate the creole-

18. E. Bradford Burns, "The Intellectuals as Agents of Change and the Independence of Brazil" in From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil, ed. A. J. R. Russell-Wood, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 221-222.

Portuguese conflict through Leonardo's misfortunes, but he does provide a historically accurate understanding to colonial Brazilian culture.

Memoirs contains one glaring historical inaccuracy: the institution of slavery is missing from the book almost entirely. The omission represents a remarkable flaw, since slavery formed an important basis for Brazil's economy. The northern plantation system used slaves to produce sugar and rubber cash crops. Along with minerals from the Minas Gerais area, these cash crops formed Brazil's economic mainstays. One of the few mentions Almeida makes to slavery is in reference to the barber, Leonardo's compadre. The barber had served aboard a slave transport ship. However Almeida only presents slavery as a side issue while explaining the personal history of the barber.

History might forgive Almeida this oversight if there were few slaves in Rio de Janeiro, however Rio boasted one of the largest slave markets in colonial Brazil. Most wealthy individuals in Rio used slaves as domestics, and slave-servants presented common sights in the streets.¹⁹

Brazil's struggle with the slavery issue during Almeida's day suggests one possible reason for the omission. Great Britain had hypocritically forced Brazil into a pact forbidding the importation of any new African slaves.

19. See James C. Fletcher and D. P. Kidder, Brazil and the Brazilians, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1866), pp. 124-140, for a contemporary view of Brazilian slavery.

SLAVE MARKET AT RIO JANEIRO



SLAVE MARKET AT RIO JANEIRO.

Although Almeida glossed over the importance of slavery in Brazil, Rio de Janeiro maintained a large slave population and had one of Brazil's larger slave markets.

Internally, too, younger radical elements of the population pushed for abolition. The very fabric of the Empire seemed to tear under the stress between the established economic institution and abolition. While Brazil's emperor, Dom Pedro II appears to have personally opposed slavery, he depended on the rich northern plantation owners for support.²⁰

Possibly Almeida opposed slavery, yet since he depended on a readership including plantation owners, it would have been ruinous to outright condemn the institution. Almeida may well have been suggesting that carioca society could function without slaves. Such an implication would be visible only on close examination and thus not alienate an audience already surprised at Memoirs' content. Some of Almeida's critics have even suggested that Memoirs' exploration of colonial society may have caused the author difficulties:

Pôsto que recebidas com certo aplauso, as Memórias deviam ter produzido algum escândalo entre os pacatos leitores da Côrte, habituados a leituras pacíficas, ordeiras, em cujos estrechos as paixões contrariadas constituíam os lances mais quentes e vivos da literatura romântica. Ao contrário

20. In fact only one year after the declaration of emancipation, the empire was overthrown in favor of the Republic. Haring credits abolition with destroying one of the three major supports of the Empire. Haring, Empire, pp. 85-107.

disso, Manuel de Almeida preferiu o romance de costumes, inaugurando a crítica social.²¹

Of course the social criticism makes Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant an entertaining and historically important work. Almeida heavily critiqued most phases of Brazilian society. Almeida, while making few direct attacks on carioca institutions, managed to lampoon most of the professions in Rio, including the very powerful Catholic church. It is not surprising then that Almeida originally published Memoirs anonymously. Only after Almeida's death was his authorship admitted.²²

Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant provides a very accessible means to gain insight into Brazilian colonial history. Although there are some inaccuracies and omissions, Almeida brings to life colonial institutions like school, the church and the role nepotism played. Moreover, while Almeida's social criticism injects certain biases into Memoirs, these also serve to give the reader an idea of the historical problems faced by the Empire. Thus Memoirs illustrates both colonial and imperial Brazil.

21. Even though it received a certain applause, Memoirs must have produced some scandal among the wealthy readers of the Court, accustomed to peaceful, orderly works in whose straits the contradicting passions constituted the most burning and lively events in Romantic literature. Contrary to this, Manuel de Almeida preferred the novel of custom, inaugurating social criticism. Serpa, Revista, p. 354.

22. Brazilian Literature, vol 1, ed. Claude Hulet (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1974), p. 327.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS -- TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF MEMOIRS

The question of Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant's categorization remains open. Clearly the book could fit into any of the three general literary categories. Justifiably, critics have considered the work to be romanticist, realist or picaresque. Almeida's Memoirs then becomes a greater enigma as literary critics have difficulty in explaining the supposed incompatibility in the three classifications.

Traditional literary analysis indicates that at least Realism and Romanticism should be incompatible. From a traditional perspective, Brazilian author Machado de Assis described well the difference between Romanticism and Realism:

I [the hero] galloped into life in my boots and spurs, a whip in my hand and blood in my veins, riding a nervous, strong, high spirited courser like the horse in the old ballads, which Romanticism found in the medieval castle and left in streets of our own [nineteenth] century. The Romanticists rode the poor beast until he was so nearly dead that he finally lay down in the gutter, where the realists found him, his flesh eaten away by sores and worms, and, out of pity, carried him away to their books.¹

1. Machado de Assis, Epitaph of a Small Winner, tr. William Grossman (New York: Avon, 1978), p. 51.

Like Machado de Assis, Brazilian critic Gomes contends that Realism reacted against and rejected Romanticism. Realist authors made a concerted effort to relinquish romantic norms in both style and content.² Even though Gomes finds evidence of Almeida's abandonment of Romanticism, the fact remains that Memoirs appears to conform to each of the categories.³

Clearly Memoirs' love theme displays a romantic influence. The development of Leonardo and Luizinha's relationship, from their first meeting through to their marriage, unveils a drama worthy of traditional European romantic authors. Further, Leonardo's vicissitudes and solutions indicate another common theme of the romantic era: the strong belief in the hero. Yet Leonardo does not present the figure of a typical dashing hero.

Also strong are the arguments for inclusion of Memoirs in the realistic movement. Without question, Almeida displayed the late colonial carioca society of Rio de Janeiro with remarkable accuracy. Almeida wrote in a lively informative manner combining the use of vernacular linguistics and descriptive situations depicting many common daily occurrences. Memoirs describes Brazilian schools in early 1800's. Almeida presents the teacher, the sounds of the

2. Eugênio Gomes, "Manuel Antônio de Almeida e o Romanticismo," Correio da Manhã, 13 February 1954, p. 1. Hereafter cited as Gomes, Romanticismo, p.

3. Gomes, Romanticismo, p. 1.

students, even the sting of the ferule. When the prayer master appears, Almeida infuses the scene with a sense of the memory and strength of the blind man. The prayer masters' hearing allows him to determine when a student has misstated a catechism, even though all recite en masse. Memoirs portrays many Brazilian colonial institutions very well.

However, critics also correctly note the presence of picaresque elements in Memoirs. Almeida's hero, or perhaps anti-hero is a rogue. Typical of the picaresque, Leonardo's behavior runs the fine line between mischief and criminality from the earliest moments. While Leonardo may have found amusement in making faces at the customers in his godfather's barbershop, some who left with nicks failed to find the situation funny. Assuredly Leonardo pays for his peccadillos; he loses Luizinha and his freedom. Yet finally Leonardo achieves vindication, and ultimately fulfills his desires. Perhaps the final result is not particularly plausible, but it definitely fits the general mold of a picaresque storyline. Another strong justification of Memoirs' inclusion in the picaresque is the episodic manner Almeida used to write the novel. The lack of cohesion from chapter to chapter in Memoirs is a hallmark of the picaresque style.

The three literary classifications seem mutually exclusive; reconciliation appears difficult. Recently, though, French literary and cultural historian Jacques

Barzun offered a partial solution. Barzun viewed Realism as a manifestation of Romanticism. Among the key elements of romantic literature are the hero, nature, and the theme of love. Barzun suggested that Realism with its intense focus on nature was, in effect, a subcategory of Romanticism.⁴

A better description of nature required Romanticists to develop more acute observation skills and realistic writing techniques. Eventually writers brought these descriptive abilities to bear on society. They focused on the nature of society largely to the exclusion of other romantic themes, like love and the hero. Thus hope exists to integrate, at least conceptually, the romantic and realist movements.

Examined under such a thesis, Memoirs may be romantic, although Almeida focused extensively on the environs of Rio de Janeiro. Memoirs, rather than being a reaction against the romantic movement, would provide a link between mainstream Romanticists and those more extreme in Brazilian literature. Rather than being a puzzle, because it will not be pigeonholed, Memoirs represents the step between one form of Romanticism and another. Rather than a precursor to Realism, Memoirs becomes a logical intermediary between works displaying the general traits of Romanticism and works emphasizing the particular characteristics of Romanticism recognized by traditional literary criticism as Realism.

4. Jacques Barzun, Classic, Romantic, and Modern (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

While such an analysis treats many of the conceptual problems in integrating Romanticism and Realism, Memoirs' relationship to the picaresque remains unexplained. The picaresque novels and novellas of Europe may have influenced Almeida; many European picaresque novels were available in Portuguese translation. Scanty information exists regarding Almeida's literary background.⁵ Consequently, the analysis becomes problematic in attempting to trace directly Almeida's picaresque influences.

Certainly the most important picaresque elements appear in Memoirs: the focus on the lower classes, the episodic story line, and of course, the rogue Leonardo. However, Memoirs distinguishes itself from the classic picaresque in satirical and narrative style.

Most Spanish picaresque novels contain very acidic satire undercutting the very foundations of society, even the Spanish sense of honor.⁶ The most direct assault in

5. Francisco Ayala, translator of Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant into Spanish, contends that Almeida did not write under the "direct influence of that [picaresque] style as it was developed in Spain, it is also improbable that he had any knowledge of its archetypes. On the other hand, familiar as he was with French literature, he was undoubtedly influenced by Le Sage's Gil Blas, although it is impossible to speak of imitation or even of direct suggestion." Francisco Ayala, "His Pen Was Gay", Americas, 14 (February, 1962): 29. Hereafter cited as Ayala, "Pen", p.

6. E.g. the story of Lazarillo's third master, who, rather than admit his poverty, pretends to be a typical Spanish gentleman (including refusing to work) while Lazarillo goes out to beg for them both. Lazarillo de Tormes, ch. 3, in Two Spanish Picaresque Novels: Lazarillo de Tormes and The Swindler, tr. Michael Alpert (Baltimore:

Memoirs on honor reflects on Major Vidigal and the general morality in Brazil. Yet even though Almeida critiques social problems, in both cases Memoirs lacks the sense of scandal prominent in Spanish picaresque.

Here nothing remains of the Spanish insistence upon pathetically censuring vice and contemplating worldly corruption uncompromisingly. In its place, the smiling understanding of a maturity rarely found in a young heart; so unusual and so admirable. And we should note that this maturity is not reduced to the treatment of the grotesque, isolated episodes, but rather embraces the whole image of the world, as it offers it in the aggregate of the relationships among his varied characters.⁷

Perhaps the distinction between Romanticism, Realism and Picaresque is not fundamentally important to an appreciation of Almeida's work. Yet for a full understanding of the influences on subsequent Brazilian novels, such literary distinctions are helpful. Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant absolutely influenced the course of the Brazilian novel. Almeida broke new ground with his costumbrista focus. The work portrays society fairly realistically developing a readable and enjoyable story. This format paved the way for other Brazilian authors like Aluísio Azevedo, Machado de Assis, and Jorge Amado.⁸

Penguin Books, 1975), pp. 49-65.

7. Ayala, "Pen", p. 29.

8. See Phocion Serpa, "Manuel Antônio de Almeida", Revista Iberoamericana, 9:18 (Mayo 1945): 351-353 for some interesting comparisons. Hereafter referred to as Serpa, Revista, p.

Vernacular usage represents one of Almeida's most important contributions to the development of the Brazilian novel. Memoirs broke with literary traditions, introducing a much more accessible writing style to a wider audience. Almeida's use of vernacular speech made the work more realistic and also broke away from Luso-Portuguese models.

It has been noted that Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias was the first major work to employ the spoken language of Brazil for literary purposes. . . . What is important is that it reveals a creative ability, an exceptional talent in that young journalist, unworried by aesthetic cannons and rushed into his work by financial necessity, that permitted him to make use of the spoken language and the colloquial expressions of the people to produce poetry of the highest order . . . Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias introduces common speech into a very "literary" literature.⁹

Almeida helped assert national dominion over Brazilian writing. Memoirs presents a truly remarkable and novel expression of nationalism in both subject matter and linguistic style.

Certainly, regardless of whatever labels are attached to Memoirs, Almeida appears to personify Romanticism, just as Byron did in Europe:

A vida breve, a obra dispersa e lacunosa, a morte trágica . . . tudo isso faz de Manuel Antônio de Almeida uma personagem singular. Quase diria, um herói! E porque não chamá-lo, realmente, um herói romântico, esbatido em mistério, esmaltando-se de legendas que o transformam assim, à distância do

9. Ayala, "Pen", pp. 28-29.

tempo, numa figura típica, admiravelmente estruturada para o cenário em que ele viveu?¹⁰

Critics have referred to Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant as one of Brazil's ten best novels. It has qualities which make its reading enjoyable. Yet, Memoirs ultimately is a simple book with little coherent theme, seemingly devoid of a comprehensive presentation of Almeida's personal beliefs. However, Memoirs' Spanish translator finds a philosophical perspective in the novel. Ayala contends that Almeida blends a completely realistic sense of disaster and disappointment with the typical romantic love theme to achieve what he calls a "higher law."¹¹ This position advances a perspective

through which other and better forms of individual conduct are understood. It would seem that the conception of the world to which Almeida is attuned implies an eternal oscillation of events that, of itself, generates a kind of inherent and universal justice: good fortune is incubating misfortune, but good fortune is brought forth from the innermost recesses of misfortune: thus the favorable and the unfavorable paths of human existence alternate . . . Frequently, a laudable action brings misfortune to the one performing it: Leonardo, moved by pure uprightness, saves Teotonio . . . but his generosity brings on very serious punishment. At other times, it is the vituperative act that is rewarded. But the

10. The short life, the diverse and gap-filled work, the tragic death . . . all this makes Manuel Antônio de Almeida a singular personage. One might even say a hero! And why not call him, really, a romantic hero, shrouded in mystery, colored by the legends which transform him, through the distance of time, into a typical figure, admirably structured for the scenario in which he lived? Serpa, Revista, p. 329.

11. Ayala, "Pen", p. 30.

connection is not always so direct; there is nothing mechanical in Almeida's conception -- on the contrary, it has the inexhaustible diversity of life itself.¹²

Ayala indicates that Almeida's life view is conceptually paradoxical -- the good or bad events have within themselves the genesis of their opposites. If, as Ayala asserts, Almeida viewed action on a higher plane, then temporal justice becomes illusory. Almeida represents an important aspect of Brazilian philosophy which reflects a general belief in a supernatural. Fate and fortune acquire greater meaning and influence in life. Ironically, Almeida becomes trapped by one of the characteristics of Brazilian society which he critiqued strongly -- superstition and supernatural belief.

Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant has several faults, both as literature and history. The work suffers from spotty development and inaccuracy through omissions. These problems are relatively minor, though, compared with the book's enjoyability and utility.

Disregarding academic debates regarding the position of Memoirs' position in Brazilian literary history, Almeida broke new ground stylistically. He paved the way for a new generation of Brazilian novelists to focus on uniquely Brazilian issues, regarding Brazilian culture, Brazilian nature, and even the Brazilian psyche. Perhaps Almeida

12. Ayala, "Pen", p. 30.

intended to create a picaresque novel, but in the process he pushed Brazilian literature into new directions.

As history, Memoirs is subject to the caveat of all historical novels: literary license. Yet to the informed reader Almeida's work portrays with reasonable accuracy the mainstreams of colonial Brazil. Memoirs also presents a "period piece" -- a book which also reflects the historical period of the author. In Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant, Almeida relates much about colonial society through the issues he included and much about his own time through the subjects he omitted.¹³

A reading of Memoirs gives the student of Brazilian literature insight into the development of the novel. For the cultural historian, Memoirs offers an "inside view" of colonial Brazil. Fundamentally though, Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant is simply delightful reading.

13. A partial antidote to Memoirs of a Militia Sargent may be found in reading such works as Gilberto Freyre, The Masters and The Slaves, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964) and Stanley J. Stein, "Negro Slavery in Brazil: Harsh and Cruel", in A Century of Brazilian History Since 1865, Richard Graham, ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), pp. 62-68, J. P. Calogeras, A History of Brazil, tr. and ed. P. A. Martin (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939) and Fletcher and Kidder, Brazil and the Brazilians, (Boston: Little, Brown and C., 1866).

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